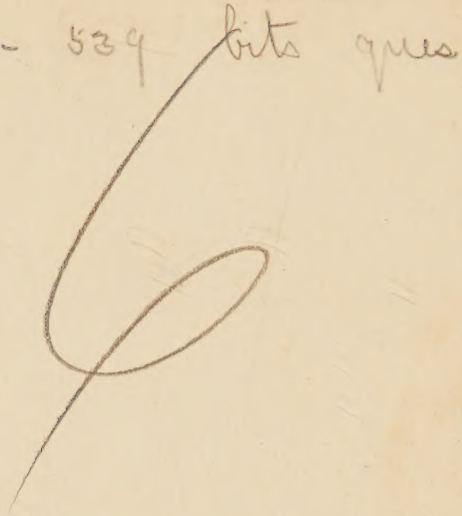
TENNYSON

THE HOLY GRAIL

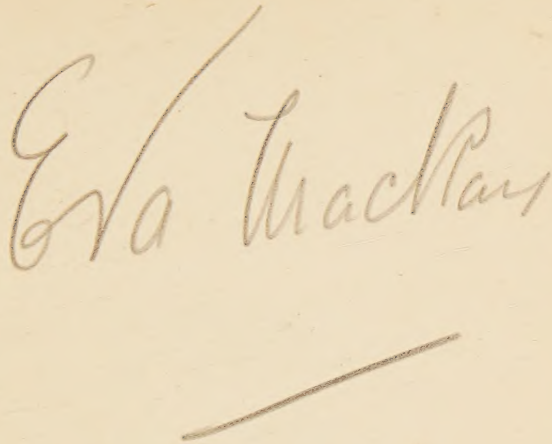
G. C. MACAULAY

361 - 539 bits ques
365



Idylls of the King

(1) Coming of arthur
(2) Gareth + Lynette
(3) Marriage of Geraint
(4) Geraint + Enid
(5) Balin + Balan
(6) Merlin + Vivien
(7) Lancelot + Elaine
(8) Holy Grail
(9) Pelleas + Etarre
(10) Last Tournament
(11) Guinevere
(12) Passing of arthur.



THE HOLY GRAIL

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
LONDON · BOMBAY · CALCUTTA
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO
ATLANTA · SAN FRANCISCO

THE MACMILLAN CO OF CANADA, LTD
TORONTO

The Holy Grail

By

Lord Tennyson

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY

G. C. Macaulay, M.A.

Formerly Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
1908

First Edition February 1893.
Reprinted 1899, 1903, 1904, June and August 1905, 1908.

GLASGOW: PRINTED AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
BY ROBERT MACLEHOSE AND CO. LTD.

PREFACE.

THIS edition of *The Holy Grail* is intended to be uniform with that of *The Coming of Arthur* and *The Passing of Arthur* by Mr. F. J. Rowe of the Presidency College, Calcutta, and with my own editions of *Gareth and Lynette*, *The Marriage of Geraint*, and *Geraint and Enid*. For a general account of Tennyson's poetry, and especially of the *Idylls of the King*, I may be permitted to refer the reader to Mr. Rowe's Introductions, to which I must also acknowledge obligation for some suggestive remarks. For etymologies I have constantly given references to Dr. Skeat's *Concise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language;* and I must also acknowledge obligation to Mr. K. Deighton, late Principal of Agra College, for several useful suggestions. In dealing with the romances upon which this idyll is founded I have been much indebted to Mr. Alfred Nutt's book, *The Legend of the Holy Grail*, published by the Folk-Lore Society. Even those who do not fully accept his conclusions as to the Celtic origin of the legend, may gratefully acknowledge the service which he has rendered to his fellow-workers by his summaries of the principal romances. Other obligations are acknowledged as they occur.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/holygrail0000gcma

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Introduction,	ix
The Holy Grail,	1
Notes,	29
Index to Notes,	83

INTRODUCTION.

THE idyll of *The Holy Grail* stands now eighth in order among the twelve divisions of the poem to which it belongs, but artistically it may be considered to be the central point of interest. If like a regularly constructed Epic the *Idylls of the King* may be supposed to have a beginning, a middle, and an end, it is to this poem that we must look for the middle. Here is the crisis, the turning-point upon which the issue depends. Evil has been growing in strength, the foundations of the edifice erected by Arthur and his great Order are being secretly sapped: can the ruin be averted by a great movement of enthusiasm for spiritual things? Surely in this direction, if in any, salvation is to be sought. The King indeed mistrusts it, but that is perhaps partly because he does not realise the extent of the corruption. It is a fair issue: let it be fairly fought out, and let the catastrophe of the whole depend upon the result.

It is in this sense that the idyll of *The Holy Grail* may be regarded as the culminating point of Tennyson's great poem. The publication of the volume which contained it (*The Holy Grail and Other Poems*) in 1869 supplied for the first time the key to the plan of the *Idylls*, of which

up to that time had appeared only the fragment called *Morte d'Arthur*, published in 1842 and afterwards incorporated in *The Passing of Arthur*, and the four idylls called *Enid*, *Vivien*, *Elaine*, and *Guinevere*, published in 1859. This new volume contained, besides *The Holy Grail*, three other idylls—*The Coming of Arthur*, *Pelleas and Ettarre*, and *The Passing of Arthur*—supplying thus at once the beginning, middle, and end of the poem, and leaving nothing except details to be filled in. This was done by the addition of *Gareth and Lynette* and *The Last Tournament* in 1872, as the first and the last idylls of *The Round Table*, and finally of *Balin and Balan* in 1885, as an introduction to *Merlin and Vivien*. At the same time *Enid* was divided into two, *The Marriage of Geraint* and *Geraint and Enid*, so that the completed poem consists of twelve idylls.

I.

The word 'idyll' originally means 'little picture,' and thence came to designate a short picturesque poem, generally of a pastoral kind. Of this class of poem a beautiful example is given by Tennyson himself in the 'small sweet idyl' which occurs in *The Princess*, 'Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height.' The meaning of the term has however been extended by Tennyson, so as apparently to include all picturesque narrative poems of moderate length, whatever their subject; and its use in the title of *Idylls of the King* serves chiefly to express the fact that in this work the subject is dealt with in a series of poems, each complete in itself, and generally without direct transition of the narrative from one to another. At the same time the

poem forms unquestionably an artistic whole, and there is a regular progress of the narrative from the first idyll to the last, as well as a real unity of conception and of moral ideals; and this notwithstanding the fragmentary manner in which the poem was published, and the probability that a considerable portion of it was produced before the plan of the whole had been fully formed. This view of the *Idylls* as a single poem is objected to by many of those who learnt to appreciate the earliest of them as detached poems, before the general scheme was developed, but it must unquestionably have been the view taken of them by the poet himself, who in the address to the Queen which concludes the whole has himself indicated the unity and moral purpose of his work :—

> 'accept this old imperfect tale,
> New old, and shadowing Sense at war with Soul
> Rather than that gray King, whose name, a ghost,
> Streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from mountain peak,
> And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still; or him
> Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Malleor's, one
> Touch'd by the adulterous finger of a time
> That hover'd between war and wantonness,
> And crownings and dethronements:'

We are not therefore to look in the *Idylls* for a historical presentation of the Celtic Arthur, nor yet for a reproduction of the hero of medieval chivalry, such as we find him in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Britonum* or in Malory's *Morte Darthur*: the framework of the old romances is used, but the tale is modern; and to find fault with the poet for making his heroes think the thoughts and speak the language of the nineteenth

century would be as little reasonable as to find fault with the authors of the romances of *Merlin* and *Lancelot* for making their personages, whom they imagine to have lived in the fifth century, think and speak like men and women of the thirteenth and fourteenth.

The tale then as completed has a definite moral aim. It is not an allegory, for the characters are men and women, not personified qualities; but it has a spiritual meaning, it shadows 'Sense at war with Soul.' At the same time it must be observed that the spiritual meaning was far less obvious in the first four idylls than in those which followed them, and that the highly developed symbolism of *The Holy Grail* and *Gareth and Lynette* is in marked contrast with the simplicity of narrative which we find in *Enid* and *Elaine*, where the situations are less complex. But all have now been fitted into a single frame, and though the methods of treatment are different, yet all unite to produce a single moral effect. Arthur represents the spiritual force that works to make the dead world live, which for a time has power to accomplish its purpose, but is gradually overborne and goes down. The strife, however, is one which is ever to be renewed: Arthur is deeply wounded, but he cannot die: he passes to the mystic island-valley to heal him of his wound, and he will one day come again and finish the work which he has begun. The hero has been victorious over the external foe, he has conquered rebels and heathen invaders; his failure is due to a more subtle enemy, to the taint of corruption which creeps in among the circle which he has gathered round him,

> 'To serve as model for the mighty world
> And be the fair beginning of a time.'

He is betrayed and the purpose of his life is spoilt by those whom he most trusted to join with one will in his work and make it perfect :—

> 'And all whereon I lean'd in wife and friend
> Is traitor to my peace, and all my realm
> Reels back into the beast, and is no more.'

In *The Coming of Arthur* we see Arthur established on the throne, wedded to Guinevere, and victorious over Rome and the heathen.

In *Gareth and Lynette* there is set before us the spring-time of Arthur's glory, when the Round Table seemed to be indeed 'a model for the mighty world,' and the King himself the representative of Christ upon earth. No sensual taint has yet crept in, or at least none is visible ; in this idyll alone of all the twelve Guinevere is neither mentioned nor alluded to : it is the period referred to afterwards as the time

> 'When every morning brought a noble chance,
> And every chance brought out a noble knight.'

In the symbolical war of Time against the soul of man, the soul is here decisively the victor.

The two succeeding idylls, *The Marriage of Geraint* and *Geraint and Enid*, are in fact one, in spite of the division. In subject they lie a little apart from the general scheme of the *Idylls*, but they contribute to it some essential elements. They show us the first insidious approach of corruption, the beginning of the moral taint which is so soon to become apparent. They turn our attention away from the court, so as to give time for the evil to grow. It would not be possible to pass without a

violent shock from *Gareth and Lynette* to *Merlin and Vivien;* but the suspicions of Geraint prepare us for 'the world's loud whisper breaking into storm,' which we so soon afterwards hear; and at the same time Enid, as a type of pure and loyal wifehood, serves as a contrast to Guinevere.

Balin and Balan was added as an introduction to *Merlin and Vivien*, and in these we realise how far the evil has spread. The tragedy of the two brothers is directly due to loss of faith in Guinevere's purity; and Merlin with all his varied powers falls a prey to the seductions of Vivien. The victory of Sense over Soul seems to grow more and more assured.

In *Lancelot and Elaine* some of the fruits are harvested of the seed which has been sown. Elaine's pure love for Lancelot is set against the Queen's guilty passion; and so closely intertwined is that which is noble and knightly in Lancelot with his sin, that honour and dishonour, the true and the false, are for him no longer distinguishable. Elaine's life is wrecked; and Lancelot breaks out into bitter remorse, and yet is unable to break the bonds which defame him.

At this point it is that there comes the year of miracle.

In *The Holy Grail* we reach, as has been said, the crisis. A wave of religious enthusiasm comes over this society. Worst and best alike vow themselves to the pursuit of an object which can be attained only by purity. And what is the result? The best indeed succeed, but their aims are thereby turned wholly away from this earth, and the Round Table sees them no more. Their service in the work of cleansing the world is lost, and the influence of their purity ceases to leaven the

society of which they were members. Of those to whom the vision came, one cares only to pass into the silent life of prayer, 'leaving human wrongs to right themselves,' and another is seen no more in this world, however he may be crowned king in the spiritual city. Of the rest the worst are made more reckless in their sin; and though some in whom a noble nature has been dragged down into the mire, but not so as to have the eyes of the soul utterly blinded with clay, struggle desperately to raise themselves, yet when the excitement and enthusiasm are over, and they find themselves left in a society which has been deprived of its noblest and purest elements, and seems condemned to a fatal degeneration, they almost inevitably return to their former path. The Quest of the Grail performs indeed that work which in some of the legends was the special function of the holy vessel itself: it discriminates, namely, between the righteous men and the sinners, the pure and the impure, and such discrimination may come as a flash of lightning to the soul, causing it to see for a moment in the most vivid manner what the truth is in regard to the things which are of the highest import, and how worthless are the false ideals in comparison with the true. The effect of such a lightning flash may be permanent; the soul may never lose again the truth which it has gained. But with far the greater number it will pass away and be forgotten, unless strengthened by daily influences for good surrounding them and the pressure of the daily task of duty. They are not spiritually-minded enough to live upon 'vision'; good warriors they may be and good workers in the rough work of human life, but they are not Galahads—no, nor Perci-

vales ; they will be lost in the quagmire, and follow not the true guiding light of religion, but the wandering fires which lure the traveller to destruction.

Here we have some of the truth suggested by this idyll,—the danger of abandoning the field of daily work and duty for the pursuit after that which is marvellous and supernatural. It is not against Superstition, as some have supposed, that this teaching is directed : that is attacked in *Balin and Balan* in the representation of King Pellam, who in his old age finds himself descended from Arimathæan Joseph, gives himself up to the collection of relics, and retiring from the world, leaves the care of his kingdom to his son, who is a libertine and a murderer. We are not to suppose that the Quest of the Grail is a mere superstitious extravagance : those for whom it becomes a quest of purity and of spiritual strength are by it confirmed and strengthened ; and although it is true that for the rest, who see in the heavenly vision only a miracle to marvel at, the vow of the Quest is profitless or worse, this is more because they are themselves without spirituality than because the religious enthusiasm by which they are in part affected is in itself an evil thing. Perilous it may be, as to sit in Merlin's chair was perilous, but perilous for good as well as for evil. The teaching really is this,—that religious impulses like other impulses must be chastened and kept within due bounds : we must not expect to have the vision with us always, as it was with Galahad,

> 'But tasks in hours of insight will'd
> Can be through hours of gloom fulfill'd.'

The true ideal for humanity is to work in the field of

appointed daily duty, and then when the day's task is done,

> 'Let visions of the night or of the day
> Come, as they will.'

Those who leave the 'trivial round' and endeavour to walk by some higher path of enthusiasm may achieve their purpose, but only on condition that they can utterly cast away the thought of self and lose themselves entirely in their spiritual calling.

Such being the idea round which the incidents of the poem group themselves, it is impossible to agree with those who hold that the idyll of *The Holy Grail* is deficient in unity. As well might it be said that the *Pilgrim's Progress* lacks unity because the fortunes of several persons are dealt with in it, and because more than one of the persons mentioned attains the goal which is aimed at. It is perfectly true that Galahad, Percivale, and Arthur himself may each independently be regarded as heroes of the poem, but it is not necessary to the unity of a poem that it should have a single hero: that in which unity more truly consists is the idea which informs the incidents and gives them life, rather than the personality of one particular actor on the scene. Let us note therefore how the incidents are each of them related to the central idea.

The story begins with the adventure of the Siege perilous. There is no need here to press the symbolism very closely and to say, as has been said, that the chair fashioned and curiously carved by Merlin represents Knowledge and is perilous for good and ill because the acquisition of knowledge involves increased capacities and responsibilities. 'For whoever sits in

the chair cannot remain as he was before. He must go forward to higher perfection, or backward to deeper failure' (Elsdale, *Studies in the Idylls*, p. 63). This is hardly satisfactory, for if knowledge has a place here at all, it is not so much intellectual as moral insight which is needed, such insight as Wagner's Parsifal gains through temptation, and it is hardly conceivable that the poet meant to represent Galahad, the boy knight, as entering suddenly upon the inheritance of Merlin's accumulated stores of knowledge, and so losing himself to save himself. Rather let us go back to the legend according to which the vacant seat represented that occupied by Christ Himself at the Last Supper with His apostles, and therefore it was presumption to be punished with destruction if any sat in it except those for whom it was destined. Those then who set themselves as a guiding light to men in matters of the highest spiritual import, if they cannot entirely cast away self are lost, as Merlin was lost; but when the promised deliverer appears who sacrifices himself wholly for men, then, as in the time of the Saviour, comes the year of miracles.

Arthur's sorrowful warning against the prevailing enthusiasm strikes the keynote of the poem. He admits the Quest for such as are capable of attaining the highest moral ideal, of losing themselves wholly to save themselves, for the Galahads and Percivales among his knights, but for the rest it will be waste of the energies which might be given to a work lying nearer to their hands; yet their vows are sacred, and they must go. It is needless to follow Galahad in his Quest: his is the career of the inspired enthusiast, to whom no doubts

or hesitations come, who has the divine vision always with him, and is so assured of victory that defeat is impossible to him. On the events of his Quest the poem dwells little, but nothing can exceed the magnificence of the passage in which is described its triumphant conclusion. Nor again need the poet say much of those whose Quest was a hopeless failure from the first. The interest is concentrated on Percivale and Lancelot, and especially Percivale, who is the narrator of the whole.

Percivale went forth rejoicing and lifted up in heart, as he thought of his late prowess in the lists, and he felt absolute confidence that he should succeed in the Quest. Then came over him like a driving gloom the dark warning of the King, and all the evil deeds and thoughts and words of his life arose and cried against him, 'This Quest is not for thee.' And suddenly he found himself in a desert of sand and thorns, and thirsty unto death, so that he too cried, 'This Quest is not for thee.' Conviction of sin has come upon him, but this is hardly a step towards that which he has to learn,—renunciation of self. He rides on and comes to deep lawns and a freshly running brook, and apple-trees with apples fallen by the brook. He says 'I will rest here, I am not worthy of the Quest,' but even as he drinks of the brook and eats the apples, all these things fall into dust and he is left thirsting in a land of sand and thorns. The gratification of sensual appetite cannot satisfy him, the thirst of his soul continues. Then successively we see how domestic comfort, wealth, fame, and even love fail to bring him content, until at length dropping into a lowly vale he finds a hermit to whom he tells his phantoms, and who

tells him that what he lacks is humility, the mother of all the virtues: he has thought first of his prowess and then of his sins, but he has not lost himself to save himself, like Galahad. The lesson is learnt at last, and he is joined with Galahad and cares for nought else on earth. Caught by the enthusiasm of his companion he believes as he believes, and after seeing the triumph of his end, cares only to pass out of the world into the quiet life.

Lancelot's case is different: he has a harder task to perform, the task of tearing asunder in himself the noble growth of knightly virtue and that evil plant of passion which has been intertwined with it so closely. For him there is first madness, and defeat suffered from men who would once have been scared at the mere motion of his sword. Then he comes in his madness to the naked shore, where nothing but coarse grasses grow, and the storm of conflict drives him for seven days over the troubled sea. At length he touches shore, and by trusting not in his own strength but in the divine help he enters for a time a haven of rest, lonely and bare indeed, but showing through its windows the serene light of the full moon shining over the rolling sea, while from the topmost tower to the eastward comes the sound of a sweet voice singing. There is rest and hope then even for him. Up the thousand steps he climbs with pain, and at length he reaches a door through which a light shines and voices of praise sound. Here at last is the very shrine of the holy vessel, and madly he endeavours to press through towards it. But he is struck down and blinded by a blast as from a seven-times-heated furnace, and though

nevertheless he sees the Holy Grail, yet it is veiled and covered. One so deeply sunk in sin as he, may not at once raise himself to see fully and clearly the mysteries of faith, though he struggles and wearies after them till his sin seems expiated. And indeed, even after all this, he returns again to his sin; for that repentance which is not only for a moment but leads to the tearing out of 'the vicious quitch of blood and custom,' and the setting afresh in new soil of the plant of purity and virtue, is rare indeed. In the next idyll we find that all is as it was before with Lancelot and the Queen; only the last hope has failed, and nothing can save them but universal ruin.

Finally Bors, who has sinned indeed,[1] but has left his sin before practice could burn it into his blood, loses himself in his love and care for Lancelot; and so he also achieves the Quest, and alone of all who achieve it returns to the path of common duty and continues to take part in Arthur's work of cleansing the world. The sanest kind of enthusiasm is that which goes hand in hand with the most sincere love of our fellow-men: and it must be remembered always that this poem with which we are concerned is not an independent work but strictly subordinate to the scheme of the whole, and that the true hero of Tennyson's Quest of the Holy Grail is one who does not go on the Quest at all, but stays behind to plough his allotted field.

[1] Tennyson does not distinctly say this, but perhaps we may assume that the Bors of the *Idylls* is meant to be the same in this respect with the Bors of the *Morte Darthur*.

II.

Such on the whole is the scheme and moral drift of this fine symbolical poem, a poem which, if it may be judged separately as an independent work, as well as in combination with the rest of the idylls, ought probably be ranked as the highest achievement of the author's genius. It would be difficult indeed to name any poem in the English language which surpasses it in sustained elevation of ideal or in power and splendour of workmanship.

When we examine the poem in detail we find in it the same characteristics of style which we have already noted in commenting upon other idylls, though here the poet's fancy is kept in stricter check, and on the whole a higher level of technical perfection is attained. The most important of these characteristics are extreme simplicity of diction combined with wonderful richness of description and imagery, and an almost perfect command of all the harmonies of language and of the effects which may be produced by combination of sounds. The simplicity of Tennyson's diction is closely connected with his preference for words which belong to the original English stock, over those imported from French or other languages. The proportion of purely English words in his verse is perhaps larger than in the works of any other great English poet since Chaucer: and though many of those words in the English language which are of foreign origin are quite as popular as those of native stock, yet at the same time, since the less popular element in the language is mostly of foreign origin, a diction which is almost wholly English cannot

fail to be simple and popular. It is then this combination of simplicity with richness, this building up of the plainest materials into the most splendid edifices, which more than anything else makes his style individual. Almost any passage will serve as an illustration of this characteristic. Let us take for example the passage beginning 'There rose a hill,' ll. 489-539. Here we have fifty-one lines of description, almost unequalled in vividness and splendour; and yet this passage contains not more than forty words of French or Latin origin, and of these most are simple and popular, as 'scarr'd,' 'moment,' 'arms,' 'trunks,' 'base,' 'part,' 'crost,' 'pier,' 'clear,' 'vessel,' 'creature,' 'rose,' 'joy,' 'veil,' 'glory,' 'goal,' 'waste,' 'city,' 'chapel.' Add to this that eight of the lines are quite monosyllabic, and many more are nearly so, and we shall realise how simple are the materials out of which such brilliant results are produced. A reviewer of the four idylls which were published in 1859 remarks that 'since the definite formation of the English language no poetry has been written with so small an admixture of Latin as the *Idylls of the King*, and what will sound still stranger in the ears of those who have been in the habit of regarding the Latin element as essential to the dignity of poetry, no language has surpassed in epic dignity the English of these poems' (*Edinb. Rev.* 1859). The statement is true at least in an equal degree of the idylls which have been published since that date, and there is no doubt that this characteristic has contributed much to the great popularity of Tennyson, who in some respects has the stamp rather of the cultured than of the popular poet.

The second main characteristic of the poet's style is

picturesqueness of description and imagery. It may fairly be said that Tennyson is the most picturesque of English poets. If we compare him with Spenser, for example, with whom he has considerable affinity, we shall be all the more struck with the truth and completeness of background and surroundings which he gives to his figures, and that too by a few magical touches which set the whole scenery vividly before us, while the older poet, picturesque as he too is in a certain sense, often endeavours to construct impossible scenes by long enumeration of details. Tennyson sees with unsurpassable accuracy and with the eye of an artist, and is able to sum up for us that which he has seen in phrases which have all the effect of a revelation. Of picturesque description the idyll of *The Holy Grail* offers many fine examples, and notably those of the city of Camelot, of Percivale's visions, of Galahad's passage to the spiritual city, and of Lancelot at the castle of Carbonek. But when we pass from description to simile we have to note a remarkable and rather significant change in the poet's style. Whereas generally Tennyson's similes are fully elaborated pictures, with a curious aptness of detail which invites us to apply the comparison even in the minutest particular, this poem is marked by the almost total absence of this kind of ornament. Comparisons are made either by metaphor or by the brief and rapid indication of a simile, which is never elaborated in the manner which we have been accustomed to see in such idylls as *Geraint and Enid*. Instead of similes four or five lines in length, we have such short comparisons as these :—

> 'Torn as a sail that leaves the rope is torn
> In tempest' :—212 f.

'I saw the spiritual city and all her spires
And gateways in a glory like one pearl . . .
Strike from the sea';—526 ff.

'And almost plaster'd like a martin's nest
To these old walls';—548 f.

'In colour like the fingers of a hand
Before a burning taper,'—690 f.

'A castle like a rock upon a rock,'—811.

'Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a lark,'—830.

and it is not until the pause towards the conclusion that any single simile is allowed to extend to as much as three lines :—

'and is but as the hind
To whom a space of land is given to plow,
Who may not wander from the allotted field
Before his work be done";—902 ff.

This severe compression must be regarded as an indication of the greater force and intensity of the poem as compared with the idylls which have preceded it. Here there is nothing of the idyllic character except the picture of the simple monk and his small pursuits and interests, which serves to set off the high visionary enthusiasms and the heroic successes and failures of the knights of the Quest : the poet has felt that in this crisis of the action there is no time for mere ornament.

In speaking of the third chief characteristic, namely the power of combining and harmonising sounds in verse so as to produce the required effects, there is danger perhaps of a misunderstanding. We must remember that we are dealing with the mature work of a poet who has made himself master of his instrument of expression as a great

musician is master of his pipes or strings, and who can produce the effects which he requires without much separate attention to the technical elements on which they depend. 'By years of study and practice . . . . his ear has been so trained to the harmonies of sound as to lead to a remarkable phonetic agreement, by a process of more or less unconscious selection and euphonious grouping of his words (Elsdale, *Studies in the Idylls*, p. 180). Therefore, when in commenting upon this poem we note effects produced by these means, by alliteration for example, by the harmonious or discordant collocation of sounds, or by imitation in the rhythm of the verse of the action described, we must not always conclude that each one of these artifices was separately contrived by the poet to produce the effect. Use in this matter has become a second nature, and in poems which like *The Holy Grail* belong to the fulness of the poet's development in regard to technical skill, we shall find that the effects are produced by less perceptible means, and probably also more unconsciously than formerly. Alliteration is frequently used by Tennyson either for emphasis or as a source of delicate harmony, but we shall hardly find here such passages of sustained alliteration as it would be easy to quote from the earliest idylls. It occurs, but in a more limited and generally less obvious form, and is often present as a source of harmony in the verse without at all forcing itself on our attention. Of this it would be easy to find examples everywhere, such for instance as the following :—

> 'And earthly heats that spring and sparkle out
> Among us in the jousts, while women watch
> Who wins, who falls.'—33 ff.

'After the day of darkness, when the dead
Went wandering o'er Moriah.'—49 f.

'In silver armour suddenly Galahad shone'—458.

'what other fire than he,
Whereby the blood beats and the blossom blows,
And the sea rolls, and all the world is warmed.'—667 ff.

To this kind of alliteration, whose chief merit is to be concealed, it is not necessary to call attention constantly where it occurs. The student who wishes to analyse the rhythmical harmony into its component elements will readily discover it without the help of a commentator.

What has been said applies also to the poet's style of versification and his management of the metre. For most poets the liberty acquired by discarding 'the troublesome and modern bondage of riming' proves to be rather dangerous, but for such a master as Tennyson it could not be anything but a gain to exchange so formal a method of satisfying the ear for the free exercise of his own sense of harmony. In his hands blank verse is not only a beautiful and dignified form of expression for the ordinary narrative, but also a most flexible instrument for expressing emotion and for representing the action by rhythm. It has very great variety in accent, pause, and cadence, and the trochaic rhythm is freely alternated with the iambic, often with the happiest effect. In such a passage as the following, for example, the rhythmical effect is due almost wholly to the variation of iambic with trochaic at the beginning of the line, and the arrangement of the pauses of the verse :—

> 'For, waked at dead of night, I heard a sound
> As of a silver horn from o'er the hills
> Blown, and I thought, "It is not Arthur's use
> To hunt by moonlight;" and the slender sound
> As from a distance beyond distance grew
> Coming upon me—O never harp nor horn,
> Nor aught we blow with breath, or touch with hand,
> Was like that music as it came; and then
> Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and silver beam,
> And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail,
> Rose-red with beatings in it, as if alive,
> Till all the white walls of my cell were dyed
> With rosy colours leaping on the wall;
> And then the music faded, and the Grail
> Past, and the beam decay'd, and from the walls
> The rosy quiverings died into the night.'—108-123.

The trochaic variation at the beginning of the verse is especially common, and often occurs in several successive lines, as *e.g.* 767 ff. :—

> 'Happier are those that welter in their sin,
> Swine in the mud, that cannot see for slime,
> Slime of the ditch':

and supernumerary syllables are used freely everywhere except at the end of the line. A characteristic type of verse is that which has a pause after the third measure, with an additional syllable thrown in at this point, as in l. 743,—'And merry maidens in it; and then this gale,' and 774,—'Not to be pluck'd asunder; and when thy knights,' etc.

At times a certain degree of monotony in the verse is designed to give additional effect to that repetition of word and phrase which is so often employed by the poet either for emphasis or pathos, or to mark a succession, *e.g.*—

'And four great zones of sculpture, set betwixt
With many a mystic symbol, gird the hall:
And in the lowest beasts are slaying men,
And in the second men are slaying beasts,
And on the third are warriors, perfect men,' etc.—232 ff.

But the examination of particular passages with reference to their rhythmical quality will find a place more properly in the notes. It is enough to say here that there is hardly any variety of rhythmical effect of which Tennyson's blank verse is not capable.

III.

Finally, something must be said about the origin of the story, the legend of the Sangraal, in order that we may understand both Tennyson's debt to his predecessors and (still more) his originality. The cycle of romance which deals with this subject is the most interesting and curious literary production of that period within which the romances of chivalry were developed. Its origin and formation present problems of the greatest difficulty to the student, and differences of opinion will always exist as to the mutual relation of the different versions of the story, and as to the proportions in which the elements of myth, saga, legend, and romance have been blended together to form them. Into these questions it is not necessary for us to enter. Tennyson in his poem of *The Holy Grail*, so far as he is not original, has followed almost exclusively that later development of the tale which was made popular in England by Malory's *Morte Darthur*, and it will be enough to indicate very briefly the other forms in which the story appears, before summarising this.

The older form of the tale has Percivale for its hero, and the main incidents of it are these:—Percivale's father and brothers have been killed in tournaments, and his mother therefore has retired to the forests and brought up her one remaining child in ignorance of all worldly things, and especially of chivalry. Accidentally, when a youth, he sees some armed knights, and after in vain endeavouring to obtain leave from his mother to go, he leaves her and comes to Arthur's Court. Thence he rides forth on adventures and comes to a castle, where he finds a wounded King, who solaces himself with fishing and is called 'the rich Fisher.' The King and his land are under a spell, and he may not die nor the land be made fertile until there come a knight who will undo the spell. At this castle Percivale sees a procession of persons bearing a bleeding lance, a 'Graal,' and a silver plate. The Graal is borne by a maiden. He thinks of asking about them, but forbears. In the morning he finds the castle deserted: he leaves it and is reproached by those whom he meets for not having asked concerning that which he has seen. He vainly endeavours to find the castle again and meets with many various adventures. At length he comes to it again and finds the Fisher King as before. He sees the relics again and asks concerning them. The lance is that with which Christ's side was pierced on the cross, the Graal is the vessel in which the precious blood of Christ was received. Percivale asks how it came thither, and he is told that Joseph of Arimathæa was miraculously fed by it for forty years in prison, and when freed came carrying it to the land of Sarras, where he converted Evelac, the king of Sarras; and thence he passed into

Britain with his son and followers and converted that land also, leaving the sacred vessel and the other relics in charge of his descendants, one of whom is the Fisher King. The origin of his wound and the manner of his healing or death are variously stated, but it is found that Percivale also is of the seed of Joseph of Arimathæa, and after undoing the spell he is crowned King. Finally he withdraws from the world into the desert, accompanied by the Graal and the lance; and when he dies, these are carried up to heaven and no one sees them more.

This is the substance of the story in its earlier form, represented especially by the poem called *Le Conte del Graal*, (written by Chrestien de Troyes and others at the end of the 12th and the beginning of the 13th century), by the prose romance of *Perceval*, and the German metrical romance by Wolfram von Eschenbach called *Parzival*. This last however, written in the middle of the 13th century, is in many ways original, and especially in the account which is given of the Grail itself.

In the earlier form of the story it should be observed that Percivale is the sole hero (so far as there is another it is Gawain); there is no especial connection between the Grail and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; there is no general Quest of the Grail proclaimed, and virginity is not even alluded to as a qualification for achieving success. The later form is represented chiefly by the prose romance of the *Queste del Saint Graal*, which was composed for edification and under the influence of monastic ideals about the beginning of the 13th century. In this a new hero, Galahad is boldly substituted for

Percivale, who takes the second place; the general vow of the Quest is the motive of the whole narrative; the Grail is always sacramental, and the one qualification for achieving the Quest is perfect chastity. As regards the history of the Grail itself, this form of the story agrees with the other; and it shows the influence of the older versions not only in the prominent place assigned to Percivale, but also in the introduction of a Grail castle and a maimed King (who indeed appears several times under different names), and in the allusions to the 'rich Fisher,' who is made the grandfather of Galahad: nay, the incident of the question not asked is introduced in one place, but in connection with Lancelot instead of Percivale. Also the Grail itself retains that property of miraculously producing food, which recalls certain magic vessels of pagan (Celtic) mythology, from which it is perhaps in part derived.

This form of the story, in which it is entirely incorporated with the romances of the Round Table, was naturally that which was followed by Malory in the *Morte Darthur* and by Tennyson in the *Idylls of the King*, as the older form, represented by Wolfram von Eschenbach's poem, has been followed by the other great artist of our age who has dealt with the subject—namely Wagner in *Parsifal*. Tennyson's treatment of the theme, however, is very largely original. His artistic feeling led him practically to restore Percivale to his place as hero of the Quest. He felt that Galahad was too unsubstantial to supply the required amount of human interest. In other respects, however, the incidents of the older version almost entirely disappear in his handling. Moreover, the Quest itself is very doubt-

fully approved by the poet. Arthur is his ideal of manhood, and for him, as has been shown, the Quest is a turning of practical energy to the pursuit of visionary objects, which can be justified only in a few exceptional cases, if at all.

The *Queste del Saint Graal*, a prose romance generally found in combination with the *Lancelot*, is ascribed in the manuscripts to Walter de Map, the well-known archdeacon of Oxford in the reign of Henry II. To him are ascribed a very large number of romances, many more than he could with any probability have found time to write, and in this case the weight of evidence seems to be against the theory of his authorship. It belongs probably to the early years of the thirteenth century, a period during which the romances of the Grail developed with surprising rapidity, and it is contemporary with the continuation of Chrestien de Troyes' poem, which, however, as has been observed, represents a much older form of the story. A sufficiently good idea of the contents of this romance may be obtained from Malory's *Morte Darthur*, which in books 13-17 follows it very closely. It may be briefly summarised as follows :—

On the vigil of Pentecost, when the knights of the Round Table were assembled at Camelot, a damsel came and asked for Lancelot, bidding him from King Pelles come with her into the forest. He went, and they reached a nunnery, where he found his cousins Boort (Bors) and Lionel. Three nuns brought with them Galahad, a youth most fair to look upon, and prayed Lancelot to make him knight. Lancelot did as he was requested, and he and his cousins returned on the morrow to Camelot. At the Round Table on Whitsun-

day the seat of each knight is found marked with his name, but on the Siege Perilous is written, 'Four hundred and fifty years after the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ ought this siege to be filled,' that is to say, this Whitsunday. Lancelot covers these words. Before they sit down to table it is reported that a great stone is floating on the river with a sword sticking therein. The King and all the knights go to see it, and find written on the sword that none may draw it out save the best knight in the world. Lancelot refuses to attempt the adventure, but Gawain, Percivale and others try, and fail. When they are sitting at table there enters an old man leading a young knight in red armour, whom he proclaims to be of the kindred of Joseph of Arimathie. He then leads him to the Siege Perilous, and lifting the cover finds written, 'This is Galahad's seat.' The young knight seats himself there, and dismisses the old man with greetings to his uncle King Pelles, and his grandfather the rich Fisher. Lancelot recognises the new knight as his son. Galahad then essays the adventure of the sword, and draws it out easily. A damsel appears who announces to the King from Nascien the hermit that the Holy Grail will appear that day to feed all the fellowship of the Round Table. Arthur, foreseeing the Quest of the Holy Grail and the dispersal of the knights, holds a great tournament, at which Galahad overthrows all save Lancelot and Percivale. At supper that night a clap of thunder is heard in the hall, followed by a bright sunbeam, and no one has power to say a word. The Holy Grail enters, covered with white samite, and none may see who bears it. The hall is filled with sweet odours, and

as the Grail passes along the tables each place is filled with the meat which each one most desires. Then it departs, and Gawain tells them that heretofore no one has been so served except at the court of the maimed King. But they have not seen the Grail openly, and Gawain vows to go on Quest of it for a year and a day. The rest make a like vow, except Arthur, who is much troubled, because he knows how many will die on the Quest. A message comes that no lady may accompany any knight on the Quest. They ride forth and separate. Galahad comes to an abbey, where he receives a shield, and is told the story of Joseph of Arimathæa and of his son Josephes, who had consecrated this shield, which was kept for Galahad. Adventures are related of Galahad and of Gawain, and the story passes then to Lancelot, who has a vision at a chapel of a sick knight healed by the Grail. Lancelot remains in a state between sleeping and waking and says no word, for which afterwards much evil came to him. He hears a voice bidding him depart and not pollute the place where the Grail is. He goes forth weeping, confesses to a hermit his love for Guinevere, and is warned to tear it from his heart. He promises to do so, and stays with the hermit.

The story passes to Percivale. He has come to a recluse, who tells him she is his aunt, and informs him of Galahad, of the significance of the Siege Perilous, and that he, Galahad and Bors shall achieve the Quest. To find Galahad he must go to Castle Corbenic, where dwells the maimed King. He comes to a monastery where he sees an old man crowned, with his body full of wounds, lying on a bed. He asks about this and is told that it is King Evelac, who was punished for approach-

ing too near to the Holy Grail. His life has been prolonged for over four hundred years, till the promised knight of his seed shall come to heal him. Percivale riding forth meets various dangers and temptations, from which he hardly escapes, and finally he embarks in a ship.

Returning to Lancelot, the story tells how he did penance, and of a vision that he had at a cross and how it was expounded by a hermit, who told him much of his lineage. He comes to a place where a tournament is being fought between two parties of knights, the one party in white armour and the other in black. Lancelot joins the side of the black knights and is captured, at which he is sorrowful, because it seems to him that it is because of his sins. He rides away and meets a recluse who tells him that the tournament is symbolical of the Quest, and the black knights are those who are polluted with sin.

The story passes to Gawain, who meets Hector de Maris, and they journey together. They meet with few adventures, but have dreams, which are expounded to them by the hermit Nascien as signifying that they are too full of sin to continue the Quest.

Meanwhile Bors meets a hermit to whom he confesses, and vows to eat bread and drink water only till the Quest shall be achieved. He has various adventures, partly due to deceit of the devil, and finally comes to a ship covered with white samite, in which he finds Percivale, who tells him his adventures.

Galahad shortly after is brought to the same ship by a damsel. They all sail till they come to an island, where is another ship, on which is written that none may enter it but those who are full of faith. The damsel tells

Percivale that she is his sister. They enter the ship and find a sword, which none but Galahad can draw. The scabbard is of serpent's skin but the hangings of poor stuff, and none but a king's daughter who is a maid may make new ones for it. The story of this sword is told, and also of other mysterious things which they find there. Percivale's sister supplies hangings for the sword made of her own hair, and Galahad girds it on. They set sail and land at Castle Carchelois, the inmates of which attack them but are slain. They come to another castle, where Percivale's sister gives a dishful of her blood to heal the lady of the Castle, and so dies, giving directions that her body shall be put in a ship and buried at Sarras.

Lancelot goes on board a ship and finds therein the body of Percivale's sister. After a month he is joined by Galahad and they pass half a year together. They come to land and Galahad leaves his father. Lancelot after another month comes to a castle guarded by two lions, against whom he at first tries to defend himself, but is reproved for trusting in his own strength. Entering he comes to the door of a room within which is the Holy Grail and one celebrating mass. He is warned not to enter, but presses forward and is struck down by a fiery wind. For fourteen days he remains dumb and without food or drink. He finds he is in Castle Corbenic, where lives King Pelles, who receives him gladly. The Grail fills all the tables with abundant food.

Galahad comes to the abbey where King Mordrains (Evelac) is, who asks that he may die in his arms. Galahad takes him to his breast and he dies, and all his wounds are found to be healed. Galahad rides five

years with Percivale (Malory says 'five days'), achieving adventures. They meet Bors, and all three came to Castle Corbenic, where they are greeted by King Pelles, and Galahad makes whole the broken sword with which Joseph was wounded. At vesper-time a hot wind strikes the palace, and a voice orders all who are unfit for Christ's table to depart. All depart save the three knights, King Pelles, his son, and his niece. To them enter nine other knights and salute Galahad. Then four damsels bring in a man on a bed, crowned, in evil plight, who greets Galahad as his long-expected deliverer. King Pelles, his son, and his niece depart: then a man comes borne in a chair by four angels, who place him before the table, upon which the Holy Grail now stands. This is Joseph, first bishop of Christendom. He kneels and opens the doors of the ark, whence issue four angels bearing lights, a cloth of red samite and a bleeding lance. Joseph celebrates the Sacrament, and as it were a child descends from heaven and strikes itself into the wafer, so that it takes human form. Joseph vanishes, but out of the holy vessel comes Christ, with blood flowing from hands, feet, and body. He gives the Sacrament to Galahad and his companions, tells them that the Grail is the dish wherein He ate the lamb at the Last Supper, and bids Galahad follow the Holy Grail with Percivale and Bors to the city of Sarras. Galahad asks if all who are present may not go, but Christ says that they are twelve as the apostles were twelve, and must separate as these did. Before departing Galahad is to heal the maimed King with some of the blood of the lance. He does so, and the three set out in a ship with the Holy Grail and the body of Percivale's sister. They land at

Sarras, bury Percivale's sister, and are cast into prison by the King of the city for the space of a year, during which they are fed by the Holy Grail. On the death of this king Galahad is crowned king, and a year after this the three, worshipping before the Holy Grail, see a man clad like a bishop, who begins the mass and reveals to Galahad the mystery of the Sacrament. Galahad prays that he may pass from this life, and the bishop gives him the body of the Lord, saying that he is Josephes son of Joseph of Arimathæa. Galahad takes leave of Percivale and Bors, and his soul is taken by angels to heaven. A hand comes from heaven and takes away the Grail and the lance, so that no one has seen them since. Percivale goes into a hermitage, where Bors stays with him for fourteen months. Then Percivale dies, and is buried by Bors, who afterwards returns to Britain and comes to Camelot. All are rejoiced to see him, and he relates the adventures of the Holy Grail.

It will be seen that some of the incidents of Tennyson's poem are based upon those of this romance, but he has so rearranged them, and so much altered their form and colouring, that it would not be profitable to set down here in detail the differences between the two stories. The parts where he most closely follows the romance are in the account of the appearance of the Holy Grail to the assembled knights, and of Lancelot's adventure at the castle of Carbonek. The points in which he is most original are the setting of the whole poem with the character of the monk Ambrosius, the total exclusion of the maimed King, the symbolism of Percivale's quest, the adventures of Bors, and the passing

of Galahad. To this must be added the reflections of Arthur upon the moral bearing of the whole, which must be taken to represent the feeling of the poet himself. The poem is a new development of the old theme; and if anyone desires to realise how wide the differences may be between two great works of poetical genius, both belonging to the same generation, both animated by the same spiritual ideals, and both dealing with the same original theme, he will do well to study together Wagner's drama of *Parsifal* and Tennyson's idyll of *The Holy Grail.*

THE HOLY GRAIL.

From noiseful arms, and acts of prowess done
In tournament or tilt, Sir Percivale,
Whom Arthur and his knighthood call'd The Pure,
Had pass'd into the silent life of prayer,
Praise, fast, and alms; and leaving for the cowl
The helmet in an abbey far away
From Camelot, there, and not long after, died.

And one, a fellow-monk among the rest,
Ambrosius, loved him much beyond the rest,
And honour'd him, and wrought into his heart
A way by love that waken'd love within,
To answer that which came: and as they sat
Beneath a world-old yew-tree, darkening half
The cloisters, on a gustful April morn
That puff'd the swaying branches into smoke
Above them, ere the summer when he died,
The monk Ambrosius question'd Percivale:

'O brother, I have seen this yew-tree smoke,
Spring after spring, for half a hundred years:
For never have I known the world without,
Nor ever stray'd beyond the pale: but thee,
When first thou camest—such a courtesy
Spake thro' the limbs and in the voice—I knew

For one of those who eat in Arthur's hall;
For good ye are and bad, and like to coins,
Some true, some light, but every one of you
Stamp'd with the image of the King; and now
Tell me, what drove thee from the Table Round,
My brother? was it earthly passion crost?'

'Nay,' said the knight; 'for no such passion mine.
But the sweet vision of the Holy Grail
Drove me from all vainglories, rivalries,
And earthly heats that spring and sparkle out
Among us in the jousts, while women watch
Who wins, who falls; and waste the spiritual strength
Within us, better offer'd up to Heaven.'

To whom the monk: 'The Holy Grail!—I trust
We are green in Heaven's eyes; but here too much
We moulder—as to things without I mean—
Yet one of your own knights, a guest of ours,
Told us of this in our refectory,
But spake with such a sadness and so low
We heard not half of what he said. What is it?
The phantom of a cup that comes and goes?'

'Nay, monk! what phantom?' answer'd Percivale.
'The cup, the cup itself, from which our Lord
Drank at the last sad supper with his own.
This, from the blessed land of Aromat—
After the day of darkness, when the dead
Went wandering o'er Moriah—the good saint,
Arimathæan Joseph, journeying brought
To Glastonbury, where the winter thorn
Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of our Lord.
And there awhile it bode; and if a man
Could touch or see it, he was heal'd at once,
By faith, of all his ills. But then the times

Grew to such evil that the holy cup
Was caught away to Heaven, and disappear'd.'

To whom the monk: 'From our old books I know
That Joseph came of old to Glastonbury,
And there the heathen Prince, Arviragus,
Gave him an isle of marsh whereon to build;
And there he built with wattles from the marsh
A little lonely church in days of yore,
For so they say, these books of ours, but seem
Mute of this miracle, far as I have read.
But who first saw the holy thing to-day?'

'A woman,' answer'd Percivale, 'a nun,
And one no further off in blood from me
Than sister; and if ever holy maid
With knees of adoration wore the stone,
A holy maid; tho' never maiden glow'd,
But that was in her earlier maidenhood,
With such a fervent flame of human love,
Which being rudely blunted, glanced and shot
Only to holy things; to prayer and praise
She gave herself, to fast and alms. And yet,
Nun as she was, the scandal of the Court,
Sin against Arthur and the Table Round,
And the strange sound of an adulterous race,
Across the iron grating of her cell
Beat, and she pray'd and fasted all the more.

'And he to whom she told her sins, or what
Her all but utter whiteness held for sin,
A man wellnigh a hundred winters old,
Spake often with her of the Holy Grail,
A legend handed down thro' five or six,
And each of these a hundred winters old,
From our Lord's time. And when King Arthur made

His Table Round, and all men's hearts became
Clean for a season, surely he had thought
That now the Holy Grail would come again;
But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that it would come,
And heal the world of all their wickedness!
"O Father!" ask'd the maiden, "might it come
To me by prayer and fasting?" "Nay," said he,
"I know not, for thy heart is pure as snow."
And so she pray'd and fasted, till the sun
Shone, and the wind blew, thro' her, and I thought
She might have risen and floated when I saw her.

'For on a day she sent to speak with me.
And when she came to speak, behold her eyes
Beyond my knowing of them, beautiful,
Beyond all knowing of them, wonderful,
Beautiful in the light of holiness.
And "O my brother Percivale," she said,
"Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy Grail:
For, waked at dead of night, I heard a sound
As of a silver horn from o'er the hills
Blown, and I thought, 'It is not Arthur's use
To hunt by moonlight;' and the slender sound
As from a distance beyond distance grew
Coming upon me—O never harp nor horn,
Nor aught we blow with breath, or touch with hand,
Was like that music as it came; and then
Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and silver beam,
And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail,
Rose-red with beatings in it, as if alive,
Till all the white walls of my cell were dyed
With rosy colours leaping on the wall;
And then the music faded, and the Grail
Past, and the beam decay'd, and from the walls
The rosy quiverings died into the night.
So now the Holy Thing is here again

Among us, brother, fast thou too and pray,
And tell thy brother knights to fast and pray,
That so perchance the vision may be seen
By thee and those, and all the world be heal'd."

'Then leaving the pale nun, I spake of this
To all men; and myself fasted and pray'd
Always, and many among us many a week
Fasted and pray'd even to the uttermost,
Expectant of the wonder that would be.

'And one there was among us, ever moved
Among us in white armour, Galahad.
"God make thee good as thou art beautiful,"
Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him knight; and none,
In so young youth, was ever made a knight
Till Galahad; and this Galahad, when he heard
My sister's vision, fill'd me with amaze;
His eyes became so like her own, they seem'd
Hers, and himself her brother more than I.

'Sister or brother none had he; but some
Call'd him a son of Lancelot, and some said
Begotten by enchantment—chatterers they,
Like birds of passage piping up and down,
That gape for flies—we know not whence they come;
For when was Lancelot wanderingly lewd?

'But she, the wan sweet maiden, shore away
Clean from her forehead all that wealth of hair
Which made a silken mat-work for her feet;
And out of this she plaited broad and long
A strong sword-belt, and wove with silver thread
And crimson in the belt a strange device,
A crimson grail within a silver beam;
And saw the bright boy-knight, and bound it on him,

Saying, "My knight, my love, my knight of heaven,
O thou, my love, whose love is one with mine,
I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind my belt.
Go forth, for thou shalt see what I have seen,
And break thro' all, till one will crown thee king
Far in the spiritual city:" and as she spake
She sent the deathless passion in her eyes
Thro' him, and made him hers, and laid her mind
On him, and he believed in her belief.

'Then came a year of miracle: O brother,
In our great hall there stood a vacant chair,
Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,
And carven with strange figures; and in and out
The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll
Of letters in a tongue no man could read.
And Merlin call'd it "The Siege perilous,"
Perilous for good and ill; "for there," he said,
"No man could sit but he should lose himself:"
And once by misadvertence Merlin sat
In his own chair, and so was lost; but he,
Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's doom,
Cried, "If I lose myself, I save myself!"

'Then on a summer night it came to pass,
While the great banquet lay along the hall,
That Galahad would sit down in Merlin's chair.

'And all at once, as there we sat, we heard
A cracking and a riving of the roofs,
And rending, and a blast, and overhead
Thunder, and in the thunder was a cry.
And in the blast there smote along the hall
A beam of light seven times more clear than day:
And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail
All over cover'd with a luminous cloud,

And none might see who bare it, and it past.
But every knight beheld his fellow's face
As in a glory, and all the knights arose,
And staring each at other like dumb men
Stood, till I found a voice and sware a vow.

'I sware a vow before them all, that I,
Because I had not seen the Grail, would ride
A twelvemonth and a day in quest of it,
Until I found and saw it, as the nun
My sister saw it; and Galahad sware the vow,
And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's cousin, sware,
And Lancelot sware, and many among the knights,
And Gawain sware, and louder than the rest.'

Then spake the monk Ambrosius, asking him,
'What said the King? Did Arthur take the vow?'

'Nay, for my lord,' said Percivale, 'the King,
Was not in hall: for early that same day,
Scaped thro' a cavern from a bandit hold,
An outraged maiden sprang into the hall
Crying on help: for all her shining hair
Was smear'd with earth, and either milky arm
Red-rent with hooks of bramble, and all she wore
Torn as a sail that leaves the rope is torn
In tempest: so the King arose and went
To smoke the scandalous hive of those wild bees
That made such honey in his realm. Howbeit
Some little of this marvel he too saw,
Returning o'er the plain that then began
To darken under Camelot; whence the King
Look'd up, calling aloud, "Lo, there! the roofs
Of our great hall are roll'd in thunder-smoke!
Pray Heaven, they be not smitten by the bolt."
For dear to Arthur was that hall of ours,

As having there so oft with all his knights
Feasted, and as the stateliest under heaven

'O brother, had you known our mighty hall,
Which Merlin built for Arthur long ago!
For all the sacred mount of Camelot,
And all the dim rich city, roof by roof,
Tower after tower, spire beyond spire,
By grove, and garden-lawn, and rushing brook,
Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin built.
And four great zones of sculpture, set betwixt
With many a mystic symbol, gird the hall:
And in the lowest beasts are slaying men,
And in the second men are slaying beasts,
And on the third are warriors, perfect men,
And on the fourth are men with growing wings,
And over all one statue in the mould
Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a crown,
And peak'd wings pointed to the Northern Star.
And eastward fronts the statue, and the crown
And both the wings are made of gold, and flame
At sunrise till the people in far fields,
Wasted so often by the heathen hordes,
Behold it, crying, "We have still a King."

'And, brother, had you known our hall within,
Broader and higher than any in all the lands!
Where twelve great windows blazon Arthur's wars,
And all the light that falls upon the board
Streams thro' the twelve great battles of our King.
Nay, one there is, and at the eastern end,
Wealthy with wandering lines of mount and mere,
Where Arthur finds the brand Excalibur.
And also one to the west, and counter to it,
And blank: and who shall blazon it? when and how?—

O there, perchance, when all our wars are done,
The brand Excalibur will be cast away.

'So to this hall full quickly rode the King,
In horror lest the work by Merlin wrought,
Dreamlike, should on the sudden vanish, wrapt
In unremorseful folds of rolling fire.
And in he rode, and up I glanced, and saw
The golden dragon sparkling over all:
And many of those who burnt the hold, their arms
Hack'd, and their foreheads grimed with smoke, and sear'd,
Follow'd, and in among bright faces, ours,
Full of the vision, prest: and then the King
Spake to me, being nearest, "Percivale,"
(Because the hall was all in tumult—some
Vowing, and some protesting), "what is this?"

'O brother, when I told him what had chanced,
My sister's vision, and the rest, his face
Darken'd, as I have seen it more than once,
When some brave deed seem'd to be done in vain,
Harken; and "Woe is me, my knights," he cried,
"Had I been here, ye had not sworn the vow."
Bold was mine answer, "Had thyself been here,
My King, thou wouldst have sworn." "Yea, yea," said he,
"Art thou so bold and hast not seen the Grail?"

'"Nay, lord, I heard the sound, I saw the light,
But since I did not see the Holy Thing,
I sware a vow to follow it till I saw."

'Then when he ask'd us, knight by knight, if any
Had seen it, all their answers were as one:
"Nay, lord, and therefore have we sworn our vows."

'"Lo now," said Arthur, "have ye seen a cloud?
What go ye into the wilderness to see?"

'Then Galahad on the sudden, and in a voice
Shrilling along the hall to Arthur, call'd,
"But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail,
I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry—
'O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow me.'"

'"Ah, Galahad, Galahad," said the King, "for such
As thou art is the vision, not for these.
Thy holy nun and thou have seen a sign—
Holier is none, my Percivale, than she—
A sign to maim this Order which I made.
But ye, that follow but the leader's bell"
(Brother, the King was hard upon his knights)
"Taliessin is our fullest throat of song,
And one hath sung and all the dumb will sing.
Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath overborne
Five knights at once, and every younger knight,
Unproven, holds himself as Lancelot,
Till overborne by one, he learns—and ye,
What are ye? Galahads?—no, nor Percivales"
(For thus it pleased the King to range me close
After Sir Galahad); "nay," said he, "but men
With strength and will to right the wrong'd, of power
To lay the sudden heads of violence flat,
Knights that in twelve great battles splash'd and dyed
The strong White Horse in his own heathen blood—
But one hath seen, and all the blind will see.
Go, since your vows are sacred, being made:
Yet—for ye know the cries of all my realm
Pass thro' this hall—how often, O my knights,
Your places being vacant at my side,
This chance of noble deeds will come and go
Unchallenged, while ye follow wandering fires

Lost in the quagmire! Many of you, yea most,
Return no more: ye think I show myself
Too dark a prophet: come now, let us meet
The morrow morn once more in one full field
Of gracious pastime, that once more the King,
Before ye leave him for this Quest, may count
The yet-unbroken strength of all his knights,
Rejoicing in that Order which he made."

'So when the sun broke next from under ground,
All the great table of our Arthur closed
And clash'd in such a tourney and so full,
So many lances broken—never yet
Had Camelot seen the like, since Arthur came;
And I myself and Galahad, for a strength
Was in us from the vision, overthrew
So many knights that all the people cried,
And almost burst the barriers in their heat,
Shouting, "Sir Galahad and Sir Percivale!"

'But when the next day brake from under ground—
O brother, had you known our Camelot,
Built by old kings, age after age, so old
The King himself had fears that it would fall,
So strange, and rich, and dim; for where the roofs
Totter'd toward each other in the sky,
Met foreheads all along the street of those
Who watch'd us pass; and lower, and where the long
Rich galleries, lady-laden, weigh'd the necks
Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls,
Thicker than drops from thunder, showers of flowers
Fell as we past; and men and boys astride
On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin, swan,
At all the corners, named us each by name,
Calling "God speed!" but in the ways below
The knights and ladies wept, and rich and poor

Wept, and the King himself could hardly speak
For grief, and all in middle street the Queen,
Who rode by Lancelot, wail'd and shriek'd aloud,
"This madness has come on us for our sins."
So to the Gate of the three Queens we came,
Where Arthur's wars are render'd mystically,
And thence departed every one his way.

'And I was lifted up in heart, and thought
Of all my late-shown prowess in the lists,
How my strong lance had beaten down the knights,
So many and famous names; and never yet
Had heaven appear'd so blue, nor earth so green,
For all my blood danced in me, and I knew
That I should light upon the Holy Grail.

'Thereafter, the dark warning of our King,
That most of us would follow wandering fires,
Came like a driving gloom across my mind.
Then every evil word I had spoken once,
And every evil thought I had thought of old,
And every evil deed I ever did,
Awoke and cried, "This Quest is not for thee."
And lifting up mine eyes, I found myself
Alone, and in a land of sand and thorns,
And I was thirsty even unto death;
And I, too, cried, "This Quest is not for thee."

'And on I rode, and when I thought my thirst
Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and then a brook,
With one sharp rapid, where the crisping white
Play'd ever back upon the sloping wave,
And took both ear and eye; and o'er the brook
Were apple-trees, and apples by the brook
Fallen, and on the lawns. "I will rest here,"
I said, "I am not worthy of the Quest;"

But even while I drank the brook, and ate
The goodly apples, all these things at once
Fell into dust, and I was left alone,
And thirsting, in a land of sand and thorns.

'And then behold a woman at a door
Spinning; and fair the house whereby she sat,
And kind the woman's eyes and innocent,
And all her bearing gracious; and she rose
Opening her arms to meet me, as who should say,
"Rest here;" but when I touch'd her, lo! she, too,
Fell into dust and nothing, and the house
Became no better than a broken shed,
And in it a dead babe; and also this
Fell into dust, and I was left alone.

'And on I rode, and greater was my thirst.
Then flash'd a yellow gleam across the world,
And where it smote the plowshare in the field,
The plowman left his plowing, and fell down
Before it; where it glitter'd on her pail,
The milkmaid left her milking, and fell down
Before it, and I knew not why, but thought
"The sun is rising," tho' the sun had risen.
Then was I ware of one that on me moved
In golden armour with a crown of gold
About a casque all jewels; and his horse
In golden armour jewell'd everywhere:
And on the splendour came, flashing me blind;
And seem'd to me the Lord of all the world,
Being so huge. But when I thought he meant
To crush me, moving on me, lo! he, too,
Open'd his arms to embrace me as he came,
And up I went and touch'd him, and he, too,
Fell into dust, and I was left alone
And wearying in a land of sand and thorns.

'And I rode on and found a mighty hill,
And on the top, a city wall'd: the spires
Prick'd with incredible pinnacles into heaven.
And by the gateway stirr'd a crowd; and these
Cried to me climbing, "Welcome, Percivale!
Thou mightiest and thou purest among men!"
And glad was I and clomb, but found at top
No man, nor any voice. And thence I past
Far thro' a ruinous city, and I saw
That man had once dwelt there; but there I found
Only one man of an exceeding age.
"Where is that goodly company," said I,
"That so cried out upon me?" and he had
Scarce any voice to answer, and yet gasp'd,
"Whence and what art thou?" and even as he spoke
Fell into dust, and disappear'd, and I
Was left alone once more, and cried in grief,
"Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself
And touch it, it will crumble into dust."

'And thence I dropt into a lowly vale,
Low as the hill was high, and where the vale
Was lowest, found a chapel, and thereby
A holy hermit in a hermitage,
To whom I told my phantoms, and he said:

'"O son, thou hast not true humility,
The highest virtue, mother of them all;
For when the Lord of all things made Himself
Naked of glory for His mortal change,
'Take thou my robe,' she said, 'for all is thine,'
And all her form shone forth with sudden light
So that the angels were amazed, and she
Follow'd Him down, and like a flying star
Led on the gray-hair'd wisdom of the east;

But her thou hast not known: for what is this
Thou thoughtest of thy prowess and thy sins?
Thou hast not lost thyself to save thyself
As Galahad." When the hermit made an end,
In silver armour suddenly Galahad shone
Before us, and against the chapel door
Laid lance, and entered, and we knelt in prayer.
And there the hermit slaked my burning thirst,
And at the sacring of the mass I saw
The holy elements alone; but he,
"Saw ye no more? I, Galahad, saw the Grail,
The Holy Grail, descend upon the shrine:
I saw the fiery face as of a child
That smote itself into the bread, and went;
And hither am I come; and never yet
Hath what thy sister taught me first to see,
This Holy Thing, fail'd from my side, nor come
Cover'd, but moving with me night and day,
Fainter by day, but always in the night
Blood-red, and sliding down the blacken'd marsh
Blood-red, and on the naked mountain top
Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere below
Blood-red. And in the strength of this I rode,
Shattering all evil customs everywhere,
And past thro' Pagan realms, and made them mine,
And clash'd with Pagan hordes, and bore them down,
And broke thro' all, and in the strength of this
Come victor. But my time is hard at hand,
And hence I go; and one will crown me king
Far in the spiritual city; and come thou, too,
For thou shalt see the vision when I go."

'While thus he spake, his eye, dwelling on mine,
Drew me, with power upon me, till I grew
One with him, to believe as he believed.
Then, when the day began to wane, we went.

'There rose a hill that none but man could climb,
Scarr'd with a hundred wintry water-courses—
Storm at the top, and when we gain'd it, storm
Round us and death; for every moment glanced
His silver arms and gloom'd: so quick and thick
The lightnings here and there to left and right
Struck, till the dry old trunks about us, dead,
Yea, rotten with a hundred years of death,
Sprang into fire: and at the base we found
On either hand, as far as eye could see,
A great black swamp and of an evil smell,
Part black, part whiten'd with the bones of men,
Not to be crost, save that some ancient king
Had built a way, where, link'd with many a bridge,
A thousand piers ran into the great Sea.
And Galahad fled along them bridge by bridge,
And every bridge as quickly as he crost
Sprang into fire and vanish'd, tho' I yearn'd
To follow; and thrice above him all the heavens
Open'd and blazed with thunder such as seem'd
Shoutings of all the sons of God: and first
At once I saw him far on the great Sea,
In silver-shining armour starry-clear;
And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung
Clothed in white samite or a luminous cloud.
And with exceeding swiftness ran the boat,
If boat it were—I saw not whence it came.
And when the heavens open'd and blazed again
Roaring, I saw him like a silver star—
And had he set the sail, or had the boat
Become a living creature clad with wings?
And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung
Redder than any rose, a joy to me,
For now I knew the veil had been withdrawn.
Then in a moment when they blazed again
Opening, I saw the least of little stars

Down on the waste, and straight beyond the star
I saw the spiritual city and all her spires
And gateways in a glory like one pearl—
No larger, tho' the goal of all the saints—
Strike from the sea; and from the star there shot
A rose-red sparkle to the city, and there
Dwelt, and I knew it was the Holy Grail,
Which never eyes on earth again shall see.
Then fell the floods of heaven drowning the deep.
And how my feet recrost the deathful ridge
No memory in me lives; but that I touch'd
The chapel-doors at dawn I know; and thence
Taking my war-horse from the holy man,
Glad that no phantom vext me more, return'd
To whence I came, the gate of Arthur's wars.'

'O brother,' ask'd Ambrosius,—'for in sooth
These ancient books—and they would win thee—teem,
Only I find not there this Holy Grail,
With miracles and marvels like to these,
Not all unlike; which oftentime I read,
Who read but on my breviary with ease,
Till my head swims; and then go forth and pass
Down to the little thorpe that lies so close,
And almost plaster'd like a martin's nest
To these old walls—and mingle with our folk;
And knowing every honest face of theirs
As well as ever shepherd knew his sheep,
And every homely secret in their hearts,
Delight myself with gossip and old wives,
And ills and aches, and teethings, lyings-in,
And mirthful sayings, children of the place,
That have no meaning half a league away:
Or lulling random squabbles when they rise,
Chafferings and chatterings at the market-cross,
Rejoice, small man, in this small world of mine,

Yea, even in their hens and in their eggs—
O brother, saving this Sir Galahad,
Came ye on none but phantoms in your quest,
No man, no woman?'

Then Sir Percivale:
'All men, to one so bound by such a vow,
And women were as phantoms. O, my brother,
Why wilt thou shame me to confess to thee
How far I falter'd from my quest and vow?
For after I had lain so many nights,
A bedmate of the snail and eft and snake,
In grass and burdock, I was changed to wan
And meagre, and the vision had not come;
And then I chanced upon a goodly town
With one great dwelling in the middle of it;
Thither I made, and there was I disarm'd
By maidens each as fair as any flower:
But when they led me into hall, behold,
The Princess of that castle was the one,
Brother, and that one only, who had ever
Made my heart leap; for when I moved of old
A slender page about her father's hall,
And she a slender maiden, all my heart
Went after her with longing: yet we twain
Had never kiss'd a kiss, or vow'd a vow.
And now I came upon her once again,
And one had wedded her, and he was dead,
And all his land and wealth and state were hers.
And while I tarried, every day she set
A banquet richer than the day before
By me; for all her longing and her will
Was toward me as of old; till one fair morn,
I walking to and fro beside a stream
That flash'd across her orchard underneath
Her castle-walls, she stole upon my walk,

And calling me the greatest of all knights,
Embraced me, and so kiss'd me the first time,
And gave herself and all her wealth to me.
Then I remember'd Arthur's warning word,
That most of us would follow wandering fires,
And the Quest faded in my heart. Anon,
The heads of all her people drew to me,
With supplication both of knees and tongue:
"We have heard of thee: thou art our greatest knight,
Our Lady says it, and we well believe:
Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us,
And thou shalt be as Arthur in our land."
O me, my brother! but one night my vow
Burnt me within, so that I rose and fled,
But wail'd and wept, and hated mine own self,
And ev'n the Holy Quest, and all but her;
Then after I was join'd with Galahad
Cared not for her, nor anything upon earth.'

Then said the monk, 'Poor men, when yule is cold,
Must be content to sit by little fires.
And this am I, so that ye care for me
Ever so little; yea, and blest be Heaven
That brought thee here to this poor house of ours
Where all the brethren are so hard, to warm
My cold heart with a friend: but O the pity
To find thine own first love once more—to hold,
Hold her a wealthy bride within thine arms,
Or all but hold, and then—cast her aside,
Foregoing all her sweetness, like a weed.
For we that want the warmth of double life,
We that are plagued with dreams of something sweet
Beyond all sweetness in a life so rich,—
Ah, blessed Lord, I speak too earthlywise,
Seeing I never stray'd beyond the cell,
But live like an old badger in his earth,

With earth about him everywhere, despite
All fast and penance. Saw ye none beside,
None of your knights?'

'Yea so,' said Percivale:
'One night my pathway swerving east, I saw
The pelican on the casque of our Sir Bors
All in the middle of the rising moon:
And toward him spurr'd, and hail'd him, and he me,
And each made joy of either; then he ask'd,
"Where is he? hast thou seen him—Lancelot?—Once,"
Said good Sir Bors, "he dash'd across me—mad,
And maddening what he rode: and when I cried,
'Ridest thou then so hotly on a quest
So holy,' Lancelot shouted, 'Stay me not!
I have been the sluggard, and I ride apace,
For now there is a lion in the way.'
So vanish'd."

'Then Sir Bors had ridden on
Softly, and sorrowing for our Lancelot,
Because his former madness, once the talk
And scandal of our table, had return'd;
For Lancelot's kith and kin so worship him
That ill to him is ill to them; to Bors
Beyond the rest: he well had been content
Not to have seen, so Lancelot might have seen,
The Holy Cup of healing; and, indeed,
Being so clouded with his grief and love,
Small heart was his after the Holy Quest:
If God would send the vision, well: if not,
The Quest and he were in the hands of Heaven.

'And then, with small adventure met, Sir Bors
Rode to the lonest tract of all the realm,
And found a people there among their crags,

Our race and blood, a remnant that were left
Paynim amid their circles, and the stones
They pitch up straight to heaven: and their wise men
Were strong in that old magic which can trace
The wandering of the stars, and scoff'd at him
And this high Quest as at a simple thing:
Told him he follow'd—almost Arthur's words—
A mocking fire: "what other fire than he,
Whereby the blood beats, and the blossom blows,
And the sea rolls, and all the world is warm'd?"
And when his answer chafed them, the rough crowd,
Hearing he had a difference with their priests,
Seized him, and bound and plunged him into a cell
Of great piled stones; and lying bounden there
In darkness thro' innumerable hours
He heard the hollow-ringing heavens sweep
Over him till by miracle—what else?—
Heavy as it was, a great stone slipt and fell
Such as no wind could move: and thro' the gap
Glimmer'd the streaming scud: then came a night
Still as the day was loud; and thro' the gap
The seven clear stars of Arthur's Table Round—
For, brother, so one night, because they roll
Thro' such a round in heaven, we named the stars,
Rejoicing in ourselves and in our King—
And these, like bright eyes of familiar friends,
In on him shone: "And then to me, to me,"
Said good Sir Bors, "beyond all hopes of mine,
Who scarce had pray'd or ask'd it for myself—
Across the seven clear stars—O grace to me—
In colour like the fingers of a hand
Before a burning taper, the sweet Grail
Glided and past, and close upon it peal'd
A sharp quick thunder." Afterwards, a maid,
Who kept our holy faith among her kin
In secret, entering, loosed and let him go.'

To whom the monk: 'And I remember now
That pelican on the casque: Sir Bors it was
Who spake so low and sadly at our board;
And mighty reverent at our grace was he:
A square-set man and honest; and his eyes,
An out-door sign of all the warmth within,
Smiled with his lips—a smile beneath a cloud,
But heaven had meant it for a sunny one:
Ay, ay, Sir Bors, who else? But when ye reach'd
The city, found ye all your knights return'd,
Or was there sooth in Arthur's prophecy,
Tell me, and what said each, and what the King?'

Then answer'd Percivale: 'And that can I,
Brother, and truly; since the living words
Of so great men as Lancelot and our King
Pass not from door to door and out again,
But sit within the house. O, when we reach'd
The city, our horses stumbling as they trode
On heaps of ruin, hornless unicorns,
Crack'd basilisks, and splinter'd cockatrices,
And shatter'd talbots, which had left the stones
Raw, that they fell from, brought us to the hall.

'And there sat Arthur on the daïs-throne,
And those that had gone out upon the Quest,
Wasted and worn, and but a tithe of them,
And those that had not, stood before the King,
Who, when he saw me, rose, and bad me hail,
Saying, "A welfare in thine eye reproves
Our fear of some disastrous chance for thee
On hill, or plain, at sea, or flooding ford.
So fierce a gale made havoc here of late
Among the strange devices of our kings;
Yea, shook this newer, stronger hall of ours,
And from the statue Merlin moulded for us

Half-wrench'd a golden wing; but now—the Quest,
This vision—hast thou seen the Holy Cup,
That Joseph brought of old to Glastonbury?"

'So when I told him all thyself hast heard,
Ambrosius, and my fresh but fixt resolve
To pass away into the quiet life,
He answer'd not, but, sharply turning, ask'd
Of Gawain, "Gawain, was this Quest for thee?"

'"Nay, lord," said Gawain, "not for such as I.
Therefore I communed with a saintly man,
Who made me sure the Quest was not for me;
For I was much awearied of the Quest:
But found a silk pavilion in a field,
And merry maidens in it; and then this gale
Tore my pavilion from the tenting-pin,
And blew my merry maidens all about
With all discomfort; yea, and but for this,
My twelvemonth and a day were pleasant to me."

'He ceased; and Arthur turn'd to whom at first
He saw not, for Sir Bors, on entering, push'd
Athwart the throng to Lancelot, caught his hand,
Held it, and there, half-hidden by him, stood,
Until the King espied him, saying to him,
"Hail, Bors! if ever loyal man and true
Could see it, thou hast seen the Grail;" and Bors,
"Ask me not, for I may not speak of it:
I saw it;" and the tears were in his eyes.

'Then there remain'd but Lancelot, for the rest
Spake but of sundry perils in the storm;
Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy Writ,
Our Arthur kept his best until the last;

"Thou, too, my Lancelot," ask'd the King, "my friend,
Our mightiest, hath this Quest avail'd for thee?"

'"Our mightiest!" answer'd Lancelot, with a groan;
"O King!"—and when he paused, methought I spied
A dying fire of madness in his eyes—
"O King, my friend, if friend of thine I be,
Happier are those that welter in their sin,
Swine in the mud, that cannot see for slime,
Slime of the ditch: but in me lived a sin
So strange, of such a kind, that all of pure,
Noble, and knightly in me twined and clung
Round that one sin, until the wholesome flower
And poisonous grew together, each as each,
Not to be pluck'd asunder; and when thy knights
Sware, I sware with them only in the hope
That could I touch or see the Holy Grail
They might be pluck'd asunder. Then I spake
To one most holy saint, who wept and said,
That save they could be pluck'd asunder, all
My quest were but in vain; to whom I vow'd
That I would work according as he will'd.
And forth I went, and while I yearn'd and strove
To tear the twain asunder in my heart,
My madness came upon me as of old,
And whipt me into waste fields far away;
There was I beaten down by little men,
Mean knights, to whom the moving of my sword
And shadow of my spear had been enow
To scare them from me once; and then I came
All in my folly to the naked shore,
Wide flats, where nothing but coarse grasses grew;
But such a blast, my King, began to blow,
So loud a blast along the shore and sea,
Ye could not hear the waters for the blast,
Tho' heapt in mounds and ridges all the sea

Drove like a cataract, and all the sand
Swept like a river, and the clouded heavens
Were shaken with the motion and the sound.
And blackening in the sea-foam sway'd a boat
Half-swallow'd in it, anchor'd with a chain;
And in my madness to myself I said,
'I will embark and I will lose myself,
And in the great sea wash away my sin.'
I burst the chain, I sprang into the boat.
Seven days I drove along the dreary deep,
And with me drove the moon and all the stars;
And the wind fell, and on the seventh night
I heard the shingle grinding in the surge,
And felt the boat shock earth, and looking up,
Behold, the enchanted towers of Carbonek,
A castle like a rock upon a rock,
With chasm-like portals open to the sea,
And steps that met the breaker! there was none
Stood near it but a lion on each side
That kept the entry, and the moon was full.
Then from the boat I leapt, and up the stairs.
There drew my sword. With sudden-flaring manes
Those two great beasts rose upright like a man,
Each gript a shoulder, and I stood between;
And, when I would have smitten them, heard a voice,
'Doubt not, go forward; if thou doubt, the beasts
Will tear thee piecemeal.' Then with violence
The sword was dash'd from out my hand, and fell.
And up into the sounding hall I past;
But nothing in the sounding hall I saw,
No bench nor table, painting on the wall
Or shield of knight; only the rounded moon
Thro' the tall oriel on the rolling sea.
But always in the quiet house I heard,
Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a lark,
A sweet voice singing in the topmost tower

To the eastward : up I climb'd a thousand steps
With pain : as in a dream I seem'd to climb
For ever : at the last I reach'd a door,
A light was in the crannies, and I heard,
'Glory and joy and honour to our Lord
And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail.'
Then in my madness I essay'd the door ;
It gave ; and thro' a stormy glare, a heat
As from a seventimes-heated furnace, I,
Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I was,
With such a fierceness that I swoon'd away-
O, yet methought I saw the Holy Grail,
All pall'd in crimson samite, and around
Great angels, awful shapes, and wings and eyes.
And but for all my madness and my sin,
And then my swooning, I had sworn I saw
That which I saw ; but what I saw was veil'd
And cover'd ; and this Quest was not for me."

'So speaking, and here ceasing, Lancelot left
The hall long silent, till Sir Gawain—nay,
Brother, I need not tell thee foolish words,—
A reckless and irreverent knight was he,
Now bolden'd by the silence of his King,—
Well, I will tell thee : "O King, my liege," he said,
"Hath Gawain fail'd in any quest of thine?
When have I stinted stroke in foughten field?
But as for thine, my good friend Percivale,
Thy holy nun and thou have driven men mad,
Yea, made our mightiest madder than our least.
But by mine eyes and by mine ears I swear,
I will be deafer than the blue-eyed cat,
And thrice as blind as any noonday owl,
To holy virgins in their ecstasies,
Henceforward."

'"Deafer," said the blameless King,
"Gawain, and blinder unto holy things
Hope not to make thyself by idle vows,
Being too blind to have desire to see.
But if indeed there came a sign from heaven,
Blessed are Bors, Lancelot and Percivale,
For these have seen according to their sight.
For every fiery prophet in old times,
And all the sacred madness of the bard,
When God made music thro' them, could but speak
His music by the framework and the chord;
And as ye saw it ye have spoken truth.

'"Nay—but thou errest, Lancelot: never yet
Could all of true and noble in knight and man
Twine round one sin, whatever it might be,
With such a closeness, but apart there grew,
Save that he were the swine thou spakest of,
Some root of knighthood and pure nobleness;
Whereto see thou, that it may bear its flower.

'"And spake I not too truly, O my knights?
Was I too dark a prophet when I said
To those who went upon the Holy Quest,
That most of them would follow wandering fires,
Lost in the quagmire?—lost to me and gone,
And left me gazing at a barren board,
And a lean Order—scarce return'd a tithe—
And out of those to whom the vision came
My greatest hardly will believe he saw;
Another hath beheld it afar off,
And leaving human wrongs to right themselves,
Cares but to pass into the silent life.
And one hath had the vision face to face,
And now his chair desires him here in vain,
However they may crown him otherwhere.

'"And some among you held, that if the King
Had seen the sight he would have sworn the vow:
Not easily, seeing that the King must guard
That which he rules, and is but as the hind
To whom a space of land is given to plow,
Who may not wander from the allotted field
Before his work be done; but, being done,
Let visions of the night or of the day
Come, as they will; and many a time they come,
Until this earth he walks on seems not earth,
This light that strikes his eyeball is not light,
This air that smites his forehead is not air
But vision—yea, his very hand and foot—
In moments when he feels he cannot die,
And knows himself no vision to himself,
Nor the high God a vision, nor that One
Who rose again: ye have seen what ye have seen."

'So spake the King: I knew not all he meant.'

NOTES.

1. **noiseful arms**. In *Gareth and Lynette*, 560, 'to be noised of' means to have fame for one's deeds, and 'noiseful arms' here would be perhaps deeds of arms which gain fame.

prowess, 'bravery,' from Old French *prouesse*, formed from *prou* (Modern *preux*), 'valiant.' The etymology of this last is doubtful, but it is probably the same as Old French *prud* (cp. Ital. *prode*), and connected with Old French *prou*, 'advantage.' Perhaps from Latin *prod*, as occurring in *prod-esse*, 'to be useful' (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*).

2. **Sir Percivale** was the original hero of the Grail legend, and always a most important person in it, though his place was in the later form of the story partly taken by Galahad. Tennyson generally follows the later legend, but by making Percivale the narrator he has in fact given to him and to his adventures the chief degree of prominence. For the earlier romance of Percivale and for his place later in the Arthurian cycle, reference must be made to the Introduction. In the *Idylls of the King* he is seldom mentioned except in *The Holy Grail*; but in this he is a singularly attractive character, pure in heart and lofty in ideals and enthusiasm, yet not so miraculously raised above human weaknesses and emotions that we lose sympathy with his character and feelings. In *Lancelot and Elaine* he is called 'the meek Sir Percivale,' and in *Merlin and Vivien* he is spoken of as one who bears the stamp of purity upon his face.

4. **the silent life of prayer** etc., *i.e.* the so-called 'religious life,' under monastic rule.

5. **leaving for the cowl The helmet**, *i.e.* 'taking the cowl in place of the helmet': the cowl is the hood, which in Western Europe is a symbol of monasticism; whence the proverb *cucullus non facit monachum*. The word cowl is from the Latin *cucullus*.

6. **far away From Camelot**. This abbey is represented by Tennyson as being somewhere near the Forest of Dean on the borders of South Wales; for in *Pelleas and Ettarre* we read that

Pelleas, riding wildly away from the castle of Ettarre, reached in the space of half the night 'that tower where Percivale was cowl'd'; and it seems clear that Ettarre's castle is meant to be placed within a day's ride of Caerleon through the Forest of Dean. As for the position of Camelot, the chief seat of Arthur's Court, Tennyson in *Lancelot and Elaine* seems to place it about two days' ride from London in the same direction as Astolat, and Astolat is near the Thames at some distance below London. Malory in the *Morte Darthur* identifies Camelot with Winchester.

9. **much beyond the rest**, 'much more than the rest loved him.' The half-echo in this line of the preceding one is characteristic of Tennyson's versification.

10. **wrought into his heart A way**, *i.e.* 'worked a way into his heart': 'wrought' and 'worked' are originally from the same verb, Anglo-Saxon *weorcan*, past tense *worhte*.

12. **To answer that which came**: he found a way to Percivale's heart by love, and this love roused love in Percivale to answer to that which thus came to him from without.

14. **The cloisters**: the word 'cloister,' Old French *cloistre*, Latin *claustrum*, means properly an enclosure, hence it came to be used for a monastery. Then because of the style of building used in monasteries, 'cloisters' came to mean a covered passage running round a square court, with arches opening into the court. This inner court would usually have grass and trees growing in it.

15. **into smoke**, that is, the pollen-dust which was blown by the gusts of wind like clouds of smoke from the swaying branches of the tree. Compare *In Memoriam*, 39, 1 ff.:—

> 'Old warder of these buried bones,
> And answering now my random stroke
> With fruitful cloud and living smoke,
> Dark yew,'

in which the same phenomenon is observed and described with the poet's usual picturesque accuracy.

16. **ere**, 'before'; Anglo-Saxon *ǽr*, 'soon,' whence is derived 'early': cp. German *eher*. which is properly a positive not a comparative form (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*).

21. **the pale** is here the limit beyond which those of the monastery might not go. Properly the French *pal*, Latin *palus*, means a stake, and 'pole' is in fact the same word as 'pale.' Then 'pale' came to mean a limit marked by palisade, and hence a limit generally, or the space within a limit: so the 'English pale' in Ireland was the district occupied by the English.

thee ... I knew: the object is divided from the verb by a parenthesis. This breaking of the sentence where there is no

natural pause and throwing in a parenthesis so as to separate words very closely connected, is a characteristic of Tennyson's style, and serves often to make the speech more dramatic: see note on l. 541.

25. **For good ye are and bad** etc. He means, 'for though ye are of diverse quality, some good and some bad, yet all are stamped with one image, the likeness of the King, as coins, whether true or light, bear all the same device.' We are reminded of the passage in the *Coming of Arthur*, 268, where Bellicent, describing the scene of Arthur's coronation, says:—

> 'I beheld
> From eye to eye thro' all their Order flash
> A momentary likeness of the King':

but in this case the likeness is more than momentary, and it is not the result of a passing flash of emotion, but of habits of courtesy which have impressed a permanent external stamp.

26. **light** is here opposed to 'true,' because counterfeit coins would mostly be of less than the right weight. It also suggests the unstable principles of those who have received the outward stamp indeed, but are not of true metal. 'Light was Gawain in life,' says Bedivere in the *Passing of Arthur*, 56.

33. **heats that spring and sparkle out**: cp. *Aylmer's Field*, 705:—

> 'when some heat of difference sparkled out,'

and *Geraint and Enid*, 826:—

> 'My nature's prideful sparkle in the blood.'

34. **the jousts** are the contests of tilting, called also tournaments: 'joust' is from Old French *jouster*, Low Latin *iuxtare*, 'to approach,' hence 'to meet in combat,' from Latin *iuxta*, 'near' (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*).

while women watch: as in Milton's *L'Allegro*:—

> 'With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
> Rain influence, and judge the prize
> Of wit or arms.'

35. **waste the spiritual strength** etc. The emotions called forth by these contests, the eager desire to excel in worthy deeds, the enthusiastic devotion to a living ideal of grace and beauty, and the longing to win approval from the object of that devotion, would be essentially the same as those which religion demands and excites, but directed to less worthy objects and therefore in a sense wasted. Observe how the four syllables of 'spiritual' are reduced to two, so far as the metre is concerned.

38. **We are green in Heaven's eyes**: the metaphor is from a tree. The monk trusts that as to spiritual things he and his

brethren are fresh and full of life, like branches of a tree which are green with sap; but as to things of the world he feels that they are dead and mouldering, that is, properly, crumbling into dust, like the trunk or arms of a tree which is dry and decaying. They have no lively knowledge of or interest in things outside their own narrow range.

40. **one of your own knights.** It was Sir Bors, as we find afterwards, ll. 696 ff. The reason of his sadness is given in ll. 645 ff.

41. **refectory**, from Low Latin *refectorium*, derived from Latin *reficere*, 'to refresh,' means the dining-hall of the monastery.

45. **Nay, monk! what phantom?** *i.e.* 'what mean you by calling it a phantom?' In his eagerness to assert the reality of the vision, he addresses his brother-monk as if he himself were still a knight vowed to the Quest. Elsewhere he always calls him 'brother.'

46. **The cup**: the Grail, according to Tennyson, is the cup which was used for the wine at the Last Supper by Jesus Christ and His disciples; but in the legends the Graal or Sangraal more usually designates the dish or bowl in which Joseph of Arimathæa was said to have caught some of the blood of Jesus Christ, either as He hung upon the cross, or afterwards while washing the body for burial. Some accounts said this was the same vessel which was used for meat at the Last Supper. The word *graal*, *greal*, or *grasal*, meant in Old French 'a flat dish.' It was derived either from Low Latin *cratella*, dim. of *crater*, 'a bowl,' or from Low Latin *gradalis*, a dish on which food was arranged in 'gradation,' that is, one thing rising up above another, as it were on steps, hence, in general, a dish used for rich banquets. There are several fanciful derivations, as that of *greal* from *gré*, because it is pleasing to everyone, and of *Sangreal* from *sang real*, 'royal blood.' The symbolical connection, worked out for example in Robert de Borron's poem, *Joseph d'Arimathie*, between this dish and the chalice of the sacrament would easily account for the identification of the two. According to him, the sacrament is a commemoration of Christ's burial, the bread and wine are the body and blood of Christ, the altar is the tomb, the 'corporal' is the grave-cloth, the chalice represents the vessel in which the blood was put (*i.e.* the Grail), and the paten is the tombstone. This passage suggests also the reason why Joseph was especially connected with the sacramental legend of the Grail, he being the person to whom the body of Christ was entrusted.

48. **land of Aromat**: that is, the native land of Joseph as conceived in medieval legend; but Arimathæa is not really the name of a country, but the Greek form of the Hebrew Ramathaim (in

the Septuagint Armathaim), the name of a town about fifteen miles N.W. of Jerusalem.

49. **After the day of darkness** etc., referring to the account of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ in the *Gospel of St. Matthew*, 27, 45, 'Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour': and vv. 50 ff., 'Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom: and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.'

50. **Moriah** was the name of that hill in Jerusalem where the temple was built.

51. **Arimathæan Joseph.** For the legend about him see Introduction; and compare *Balin and Balan*, 98 ff., where relics connected with him are mentioned as seen at the court of King Pellam, who claims to be

> 'descended from the Saint
> Arimathæan Joseph; him who first
> Brought the great faith to Britain over seas';

and who shows to Arthur's envoys, with other relics,

> 'Thorns of the crown and shivers of the cross,
> And therewithal (for thus he told us) brought
> By holy Joseph hither, that same spear
> Wherewith the Roman pierced the side of Christ.'

52. **Glastonbury**, situated in the county of Somerset, is built in the form of a cross, and occupies a peninsula formed by the river Brue, called the Isle of Avalon. It was one of the earliest centres of Christianity in Britain, and its celebrated abbey was said to have been founded by Joseph of Arimathæa about 60 A.D. The 'miraculous thorn,' which flowers at Christmas, was believed to have grown from his staff. At the time of the dissolution of the monasteries, this abbey was probably the largest and wealthiest in England.

54. **bode**, from 'bide,' meaning 'wait.' The more usual form is 'abide.'

61. **Arviragus** is the legendary king of the Britons from the time of the invasion of Claudius to the reign of Vespasian; see Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Hist. Brit.* 4, 13-16. He really existed, for he is mentioned by Juvenal, but the history of his reign is no doubt imaginary. He is one of the two sons of Cymbeline who appear in Shakspeare's play of that name.

63. **wattles** are flexible rods of osier or the like, which are intertwined with uprights to form rude enclosures; the original

sense is 'things woven together,' from a root meaning to bind. With these lines compare *Balin and Balan*, 357 ff., where a massy bronze goblet at the court of King Pellam, is described as 'boss'd With holy Joseph's legend,'

'one side had sea
And ship and sail and angels blowing on it:
And one was rough with wattling, and the walls
Of that low church he built at Glastonbury.'

64. **of yore**: 'yore' is from Anglo-Saxon *geára*, 'formerly,' originally genitive plural of *gear*, 'year.' So that 'of yore' would mean 'of years,' and so 'long ago.'

66. **Mute of this miracle**, that is, silent about the miracle of the Holy Grail.

far as, *i.e.* 'so far as.'

67. **to-day**, *i.e.* 'in these later days': so in *The Ancient Sage*, 270:—

'But man to-day is fancy's fool,
As man hath ever been.'

70 ff. She was a holy maid, if ever maid was holy who wore the stones of the pavement by her continual kneeling in prayer.

73. **But that was** etc. For this form of parenthesis, see note on l. 21. It is of more frequent occurrence in Tennyson than in any other poet, and often has considerable dramatic force, cp. *Last Tournament*, 92:—

'The heathen—but that ever-climbing wave,
Hurl'd back again so often in empty foam,
Hath lain for years at rest—and renegades,
Thieves, bandits, leavings of confusion, .
. . . . . .
. . . . . now
Make their last head like Satan in the North';

and, more exactly parallel in form with the present passage, *Aylmer's Field*, 96:—

'or else he forged,
But that was later, boyish histories
Of battle, bold adventure,' etc.

75. **being rudely blunted, glanced** etc. The metaphor changes, and her love is compared to an arrow shot against something hard, which blunts its point and causes it to glance aside. The same force of passion which had once been directed to an earthly object now impelled her to the observances of religion, prayer and praise, fasting and almsgiving: cp. note on l. 35.

78. **scandal**, *i.e.* 'report of evil': the word means originally a snare or a stumbling-block, then a report by which offence is

given: 'slander' is the same word, but in its common use it implies that the report is false.

79. **Sin against** etc., *i.e.* the report of sin against the King and against the vows of his Order.

80. **sound**, 'rumour.' The 'adulterous race' are those who followed the evil example of Lancelot and the Queen, that is, Tristram and others, as Arthur himself bears witness in *Guinevere*, 483 ff.: —

> 'Then came thy shameful sin with Lancelot;
> Then came the sin of Tristram and Isolt;
> Then others, following these my mightiest knights,
> And drawing foul ensample from fair names,
> Sinn'd also.'

The sound is 'strange,' that is unwonted, because for a time after Arthur came the world had seemed to be cleansed: cp. l. 90.

82. **Beat**: the position of this monosyllable followed by a pause is forcible, and it is an effect of which the poet is fond: cp. *Pelleas and Ettarre*, 269:—

> 'and thro' his heart
> The fire of honour and all noble deeds
> Flash'd, and he call'd, "I strike upon thy side."'

The word 'beat' suggests the metaphor of storm beating against and through the grating of the cell, and recalls the expression used in a former idyll of this very scandal of the court:

> 'Tho' yet there lived no proof, nor yet was heard
> The world's loud whisper breaking into storm.'
> *Marriage of Geraint*, 26.

83. **he to whom** etc., *i.e.* her confessor.

84. **all but utter whiteness**, 'almost perfect purity': he means that she had indeed nothing to tell which could properly be counted sin, but to her with her almost perfect whiteness of soul that seemed a stain which others would not have taken note of.

utter means that which is outside and beyond other things, so we have 'utter courtesy' in *The Marriage of Geraint*, and 'utter truth,' 'utter hardihood' in *Gareth and Lynette*.

85. **a hundred winters old.** The age of the old is naturally computed in winters (they being now in the winter of life, and having about them marks such as it might be conceived that winter storms would leave), as those of the young in springs or summers: cp. Shaksp. *Love's Labour's Lost*, 4, 3, 242: -

> 'A wither'd hermit, five-score winters worn,'

and Tennyson, *Palace of Art*, 139:—

> 'A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast.'

Cp. *Princess*, 2, 92 :—

> 'And on the hither side, or so she look'd,
> Of twenty summers,'

and three lines further on :—

> 'Her maiden babe, a double April old.'

90. **His Table Round**, that is, his Order of the Round Table, the prototype of all the various orders of chivalry which were founded in romance or reality during the Middle Ages. According to the most commonly received accounts Arthur's Round Table had a hundred and fifty places, of which two were at first left vacant, one of them being afterwards occupied by Percivale, and the other being that 'Siege Perilous' which is mentioned later in this idyll. The Order was for defence of the realm against Rome and the heathen : and the Table Round itself was made by Merlin as an emblem of the round world. In Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* the Order of the Round Table is Arthur's instrument for purifying the world, and its knights are bound by vows of truth, purity, loyalty, and self-devotion, such as those spoken of in *Guinevere*, 456 ff. :—

> 'But I was first of all the kings who drew
> The knighthood-errant of this realm and all
> The realms together under me, their Head,
> In that fair Order of my Table Round,
> A glorious company, the flower of men,
> To serve as model for the mighty world,
> And be the fair beginning of a time.
> I made them lay their hands in mine and swear
> To reverence the King, as if he were
> Their conscience, and their conscience as their King,
> To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,
> To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
> To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,
> To honour his own word as if his God's,
> To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
> To love one maiden only' etc.

91. **surely he had thought** etc. This is the indirect report of his words, and so is that which follows : 'I surely thought then that the Holy Grail would come again ; but sin broke out. O that it would come now and heal the world !'

94. **heal the world.** The Holy Grail had healing powers, both spiritual and physical, cp. ll. 646 and 652. Note that the word 'heal' means properly to 'make whole,' and that 'holy' is originally the same as 'whole,' meaning 'perfect.'

96. **Nay, said he, I know not, for** etc. The negative 'nay' is in answer to the doubt in her question. 'Nay, I know not why it should not appear to thee, for thy heart is pure as snow.'

101. **For, on a day**: 'For' refers to the immediately preceding words 'when I saw her,' and introduces the occasion when he had seen her.

103. **Beyond my knowing of them**: 'beyond what I had seen in them before': in the next line 'Beyond all knowing of them' is 'beyond what any had seen in them.' The monotonous structure in these two lines is characteristic of the poet: cp. notes on ll. 234 ff., 371, and 473. The effect is often to give great additional force to one particular word or phrase, as here to the word 'beautiful,' as well as to satisfy that natural craving for repetition which causes us to take pleasure in regular metre, rhyme, alliteration, and parallelism.

110. **Blown**: cp. note on l. 82. The effect here is to represent the lengthening out of the sound in the distance. The similar position of the word 'Past' in l. 122 is meant to lay a solemn emphasis upon this, the main fact, and to set a pause between it and the details which follow.

112. **As from a distance** etc. The sound grew louder as if approaching from an infinite distance.

114. **aught we blow** etc., that is, any music we can make with breath or with hand.

116. **Stream'd thro' my cell.** This rhythm and the arrangement of the sentence gives the effect of suddenness to the event described, as in *Gareth and Lynette*, 1335, 'Echo'd the walls.'

118. **with beatings in it, as if alive**: observe the rhythmical effect. The suggestion is of a pulsation like that of living blood.

120. **leaping**, *i.e.* 'moving up and down,' a picturesque word.

121. **the music faded**: 'fade' means properly 'grow feeble,' from French *fade*, Latin *fatuus*.

122. **decay'd**, 'died away.'

124. **now**, *i.e.* 'now that.'

128. **heal'd**, of men's wickedness, as in l. 94.

134. **ever moved**, 'who always moved': the ellipse of the relative is especially common with 'one' as antecedent, cp. *Gareth and Lynette*, 874:—

> 'For hard by here is one will overthrow
> And slay thee.'

135. **in white armour**, as a symbol of his purity. In the *Morte Darthur*, Bk. 13, representing here the *Queste del Saint Graal*, Galahad appears in red armour, but bears afterwards a white shield with a red cross. In the French original a reason is given

for the red armour, for as at Whitsuntide the Holy Spirit came to the Apostles in guise of fire, so at Whitsuntide Galahad came clad in red armour.

135. **Galahad.** This, according to the romances, was the original name of Lancelot, changed when he was 'confirmed.' It is as if the writer who introduced the new hero into the Grail romance, being debarred from taking Lancelot himself, had desired to come as near to him as possible, and so made him Lancelot's son and gave him Lancelot's original name. The name of Galahad's mother too, Elaine, is the same name as that of Lancelot's mother.

137. **Said Arthur** etc. According to the romances Galahad was dubbed knight by his father Lancelot, who said, 'God make him a good man, for beauty faileth him not as any that liveth' (*Morte Darthur*, 13, 1).

dubb'd: the word 'dub' means originally 'to strike' (cp. 'dab'), then to confer knighthood by a stroke (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*).

138. **In so young youth.** He was fifteen years old, according to the romances.

142. **Hers**; the position is emphatic, cp. l. 110.

143. **some Call'd him a son of Lancelot.** In the romances there is no mystery about his birth: he was acknowledged to be the son of Lancelot and dame Elaine, the daughter of King Pelles (not to be confused with the 'lily maid of Astolat'), and to this fact he owed his special position in connection with the Sangrail: for Pelles was come of the family of Joseph of Arimathæa (*Morte Darthur*, 11, 2), and Lancelot was descended from the brother of Evelac, the original Grail King. The words 'begotten by enchantment' refer to the enchantment used to bring Lancelot and Elaine together, because it had been prophesied that they should have a son who should achieve the Sangrail. Tennyson desired, naturally enough, to give a more spiritual bearing to the achievement of the Quest, and therefore makes Percivale throw a doubt on this very unspiritual story.

145. **chatterers they** etc.: those who told these stories of him were idle tellers of idle scandal, ready to receive any tale, like swallows that fly up and down twittering and holding open their mouths for insects; and like these also they appear we know not whence and go we know not whither, so that there is no settled ground to rest upon if we would question their stories.

148. **For when was Lancelot** etc. The word 'for' introduces a reason for doubting their story, and this is the fact that Lancelot was a true lover, 'the truest lover, of a sinful man, that ever loved woman,' and could not have been false to Guinevere, or let his passions wander to any casual object

('wanderingly lewd'). This indeed is recognised in the romance, where it is thought necessary to use enchantments so that Lancelot may suppose Elaine to be Guinevere.

148. **lewd**, which originally means ignorant, comes to mean base, and hence licentious, as here.

149. **wan**, 'pale.'

151. **Which made a silken mat-work** etc., that is, her hair was so long that it came down to the floor, and her feet might stand upon it.

152 ff. This incident is founded on the romances, but there it occurs in connection with other matters not mentioned by Tennyson. Galahad in the Quest of the Grail finds a sword which is destined for him alone of all knights, but it has a mean girdle, which may not be replaced but by the hands of a king's daughter, who shall be a maid all the days of her life both in will and deed. Percivale's sister produces a girdle for it, and says, 'Wit ye well that the greatest part of this girdle was made of my hair, which I loved well while that I was a woman of the world. But as soon as I wist that this adventure was ordained me, I clipped off my hair and made this girdle in the name of God.'... And then she girt him about the middle with the sword, and said, 'Now reck I not though I die, for now I hold me one of the blessed maidens of the world, which hath made the worthiest knight of the world.'—*Morte Darthur*, 17, 7. For the occasion of this incident, see the summary in the Introduction.

161. **till one will crown thee** etc. The words are repeated by Galahad in l. 482. In the Grail legends 'the spiritual city' is the city of Sarras, where Joseph of Arimathæa converted king Evelac: 'yet hast thou not seen it so openly as thou shalt see it in the city of Sarras, in the spiritual place' (*Morte Darthur*, 17, 20), and there Galahad is crowned king. In this poem it means rather Paradise, the goal of all the saints.

162. This pause after the third measure, with an additional syllable thrown in, is not uncommon in Tennyson's blank verse: cp. ll. 743, 774, 820.

164. Cp. ll. 485-487.

168. **Merlin**: see note on l. 226.

ere he past away: Merlin did not die, but was imprisoned under a rock by enchantment.

170. **scroll** means shred or strip (of paper), Old French *escroue*, derived from a Teutonic stem allied to 'shred.'

172. **The Siege perilous**, that is, 'the perilous seat,' from French *siége*. The word 'siege' is commonly used in this sense in Malory's *Morte Darthur*, which is almost entirely translated from the French, *e.g.* 'Merlin found in every siege letters of gold that

told the knight's names that had sitten therein' (3, 2), and Shakspeare has 'upon the very siege of justice' (*Measure for Measure*, 4, 2, 101).

As regards the Siege perilous, it was made by Merlin in imitation of the vacant seat in the table of the Holy Grail, which table was made by Joseph of Arimathæa in the semblance of that at which Christ ate with His Apostles; but the legends differ as to whether this vacant seat left by Joseph represented that in which Christ used to sit or that which had belonged to the traitor Judas. In any case it is clear that there was danger to him who sat in it, unless he were specially qualified; and one of Joseph's companions, who presumed to do so, was swallowed up instantly by the earth. Merlin made the seat for him who was destined to achieve the Quest of the Grail. As to the meaning of the symbolism here, see Introduction.

174. **but he should lose himself**: 'without losing himself': therefore none could safely venture but he who knew how to make loss of self into the means of saving himself, and this Galahad knew by nature, and Percivale learnt in the Quest (see l. 456); Bors also, the third of those who achieved the Quest, had lost all thought of self in concern for Lancelot, see l. 650 ff.

175. **by misadvertence**, *i.e.* 'by inadvertence': the word is probably coined by the poet after the model of 'misadventure.'

176. **and so was lost.** It is difficult to say exactly what is meant by this, for Merlin was not suddenly struck dead or swallowed up by the earth, as was the follower of Joseph of Arimathæa who presumed to occupy the vacant place at the Grail table, but fell a victim to the treacherous arts of Vivien. Perhaps it is implied that he presumed, half unconsciously, upon his great knowledge and intellectual power so far as to take the place of spiritual leader, which he knew belonged to another; and this presumption laid him open the more to sensual snares, so that he fell the more easily under the fatal influence which reduced him to powerlessness.

177. **Merlin's doom**, that is, the judgment pronounced by Merlin, that no man could sit there but he should lose himself: so in *Geraint and Enid*:—

> 'his own false doom,
> That shadow of mistrust should never cross
> Betwixt them, came upon him.'

Doom' is properly a thing set or fixed, from 'do' which originally means to set, hence it means the judgment or decision either of a judge or of another person. The verb 'deem' is derived from it (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*).

179. **on a summer night.** The season is still summer, as it was in the preceding idylls. It may be observed that the whole

series of the *Idylls of the King* passes through a cycle of seasons, beginning with spring and ending with the death of the year in winter. Spring, however, has two idylls only, autumn but one, and winter two, so that seven remain for summer.

180. **lay along the hall**: the banquet having been 'laid' along the tables of the hall is here said to 'lie' along the hall.

182-202. This scene is from the *Morte Darthur* (or the *Queste del Saint Graal*) with some variations, *e.g.* it does not there follow immediately upon Galahad's taking his seat in the Siege perilous, Arthur is not absent, the appearance of the Grail is accompanied (as usual in the legends) by the miraculous serving to each knight of the food which he loved best, none saw the Grail uncovered, and finally the first to take the vow was not Percivale but Gawain, who in some romances takes a very prominent part in the Quest. The passage in Malory is as follows:—'And so after upon that to supper, and every knight sat in his own place, as they were beforehand. Then anon they heard cracking and crying of thunder, that them thought the place should all to-rive. In the midst of this blast entered a sunbeam more clearer by seven times than ever they saw day, and all they were alighted of the grace of the Holy Ghost. Then began every knight to behold other, and either saw other by their seeming fairer than ever they saw afore. Not for then there was no knight might speak one word a great while, and so they looked every man on other, as they had been dumb. Then there entered into the hall the holy Graile covered with white samite, but there was none might see it, nor who bare it. And there was all the hall full filled with good odours, and every knight had such meats and drinks as he best loved in this world: and when the holy Graile had been borne through the hall, then the holy vessel departed suddenly, that they wist not where it became. Then had they all breath to speak. And then the King yielded thankings unto God of his good grace that he had sent them. .. Now, said Sir Gawaine, we have been served this day of what meats and drinks we thought on, but one thing beguiled us, we might not see the holy Graile, it was so preciously covered: wherefore I will make here a vow, that to-morn, without longer abiding, I shall labour in the quest of the Sancgreal, that I shall hold me out a twelvemonth and a day, or more if need be, and never shall I return again unto the court till I have seen it more openly than it hath been seen here: and if I may not speed, I shall return again as he that may not be against the will of our Lord Jesus Christ' (*Morte Darthur*, 13, 7). The others mostly follow his example, and the King is greatly displeased, because he foresees that the fairest fellowship of knights that ever was gathered together will be thus broken up.

Observe how Tennyson has woven the words of the original into

new connections, *e.g.* 'cracking,' 'riving,' 'blast,' 'cry' 'seven times more clear than day.'

183. **riving**, 'tearing'; cp. 'rift': 'rip' is a cognate word.

185. **in the thunder was a cry** represents the 'crying of thunder' of the *Morte Darthur*.

188. Repeated from l. 117.

191. 'Then began each knight to behold other, and either saw other by their seeming fairer than ever they saw afore.'- *Morte Darthur*, 13, 7.

194. **Stood**. The position of the monosyllable with a pause after it gives the effect of the interval of silence which followed before any found a voice: cp. ll. 110, 122, etc.

197. **A twelvemonth and a day**: cp. *Gareth and Lynette*, 154, 'And thou shalt serve a twelvemonth and a day.' The extra day has a place in various rules and usages, as for instance in wearing widow's weeds. It is due no doubt to the desire to make sure that the full time of a year, or whatsoever it may be, has been accomplished: cp. Shaksp. *Love's Labour's Lost*, 5, 2, 837:—

'a twelvemonth and a day
I mark no words that smooth-faced wooers say.'

200. **our Lancelot's cousin**. The word cousin is used loosely, as often in older English. Bors was Lancelot's nephew. So in *Gareth and Lynette*, 386, King Mark speaks of Tristram, who was his sister's son, as his 'goodly cousin, Tristram.' Bors or Bohors, called Bors de Ganis, was brother of Lionel, and the most famous of Lancelot's kinsmen. He was distinguished by his attachment to Lancelot. In the Grail Quest he represents those who have sinned and effectually repented, while Percivale is tempted but resists, and Galahad is above temptation altogether.

202. **and louder than the rest**. Gawain is degraded by Tennyson into a person of no character at all: he swears louder than the rest, but makes no serious effort to keep his vow. In the romances he may be 'reckless and irreverent,' and at times false, but he is not contemptible, as he is in the *Idylls*. In prowess he is either the first or the second of Arthur's knights, and in courtesy he surpasses all the rest. Some romances assign to him a leading part in the Quest of the Grail, and even in the *Morte Darthur* he sets the example which the rest follow in taking the vow, and labours honestly in the Quest from Whitsuntide to Michaelmas.

207. **a bandit hold** is a stronghold of outlaws: 'bandit' from Italian *bandito*, 'proclaimed,' hence of a proscribed person or outlaw, one under the 'bann.'

209. **Crying on help.** 'crying out for help': cp. Shaksp. *Richard III.* 5, 3, 230 :—

> 'Methought their souls, whose bodies Richard murder'd,
> Came to my tent, and cried on victory.'

her shining hair: so more than once we have 'bright hair' (*e.g.* of Elaine), and 'shining hair' (*e.g.* of Maud). Cp. the Homeric *πλοκάμους φαεινούς, Il.* 14, 176.

210. **either,** 'each,' as often in Tennyson, *e.g. Gareth and Lynette,* 216 :—

> 'And drops of water fell from either hand.'

milky, 'milk-white': cp. *In Memoriam*, 115, 11 :—

> 'The flocks are whiter down the vale
> And milkier every milky sail
> On winding stream or distant sea.'

211. **Red-rent**: adjective compounds, especially with alliteration, as here, are characteristic of the poet. The maiden has fled through underwood, regardless of the tears which thorns or branches made in her skin or her garments.

214. **to smoke** etc. The allusion is to the stupefying or destroying of bees by smoke, in order to take their honey-comb. Their hive is 'scandalous' because of the evil report caused by their doings: cp. note on l. 78. In the metaphor of the wild bees and the honey we find suggested the ideas of armed lawlessness and plunder.

218. **under Camelot**: Tennyson's Camelot is on a hill which rises from an open plain on the one side and forests on the other: cp. *Gareth and Lynette,* 184 ff. :—

> 'So when their feet were planted on the plain
> That broaden'd toward the base of Camelot,
> Far off they saw the silver-misty morn
> Rolling her smoke about the Royal mount,
> That rose between the forest and the field.'

221. **bolt**, *i.e.* 'lightning-bolt': the word 'bolt' means properly a round pin used either for fastening wood together, or as an arrow. (Its name comes from its roundness, cp. 'bole,' 'bolster,' 'bowl' etc.) From its use in this latter sense it comes to mean the lightning which strikes an object, conceived as a missile discharged from the sky.

225. **had you known**, 'would that you had known': so later in ll. 246 and 339.

our mighty hall. The hall is described in the lines which follow more fully than elsewhere, but there is also some description of it in *Gareth and Lynette*, 396-409, where the stately pile is described which overarched the hearth, and had along its front

a treble range of shields in stone, with the name of a knight under each, and (if he had deserved it by his deeds) his arms carved or blazoned; and again in the same idyll, ll. 659-659, where the entries to the hall are described, one at the end, opening upon a range of level pavement from which 'a lordly stairway sloped,' and the other opposite to the hearth, high enough for a knight to enter on horseback without grazing the crest of his helmet, however high. Mr. Elsdale says: 'This hall, built by Merlin for Arthur, is the structure which the ideal soul builds for itself by the exercise of its powers of imagination and intellect. The other parts of the city, the roofs, the towers, the spires, we may understand as the minor accessories ... of its life. But this is the inner shrine of personality, wherein the soul itself sits. The symbolic zones of sculpture represent the growth of the shrine, that is the progress of man in his efforts to raise himself above the earthly and the animal.'—*Studies in the Idylls*, p. 64.

226. **Which Merlin built**: cp. *Merlin and Vivien*, 64 ff.: —

> 'the most famous man of all those times,
> Merlin, who knew the range of all their arts,
> Had built the King his havens, ships, and halls,
> Was also Bard, and knew the starry heavens;
> The people call'd him Wizard.'

So far as the name Merlin represents any actual person he was the Welsh bard Mereddin, said to have been the counsellor of king Aurelius Ambrosius, and afterwards of Uther Pendragon. In the cycle of Arthurian romance he plays almost the leading part, directing events by his prophecies, and stepping in to solve difficulties by his magic powers. He received Arthur after his birth and caused him to be brought up, and then produced him as King: he prophesied moreover that Arthur should not die 'but pass, again to come.' In the *Idylls* Merlin represents power of intellect without a degree of moral strength wholly corresponding to it.

228. **the dim rich city**: these epithets applied to Camelot are repeated several times in various forms, *e.g. Lancelot and Elaine*, 798, 'the still rich city'; 841, 843, 'the dim rich city,' 887, 'the rich city': cp. l. 342 of this idyll. The idea is of richly ornamented buildings overhanging narrow streets, so as to cause deep shadows, the 'shadowy palaces' spoken of in *Gareth and Lynette*, 296.

229. The drawing out of 'tower' and 'spire' each into two syllables in the middle of this line seems designed to suggest the lengthened succession of tower and spire, one rising above the other.

231. **Climbs to the mighty hall** etc. The effect is as of a suc-

cession of steps leading up from all sides to the great hall, which was the summit and centre.

232. **zones**, 'belts,' that is bands running round, so as to gird the whole building outside: 'zone' comes through French and Latin from Greek ζώνη, a girdle.

set betwixt With etc., *i.e.* with many a mystic symbol set betwixt them: so we say that a thing is 'set round with flowers' etc., meaning that it has flowers set round it.

233. **symbol** means properly a sign or watchword (whence its use as applied to the Christian creeds), then generally a sign used to represent things indirectly.

234-237. Observe the monotony of form in these lines, which seems designed here to suggest continuity: cp. ll. 371-373.

234 **in the lowest**, *i.e.* lowest zone. The four zones represent four stages of human progress—first, the condition of the savage, with whom the organisation of society and the development of the means of attack and defence has not proceeded far enough to give him a decisive advantage over the wild beasts of the forest (cp. the condition to which the land of Cameliard was brought by civil war and heathen invasions, as described in the *Coming of Arthur*); secondly, that state in which man is victor over wild beasts and begins to clear the way for civilisation; thirdly, the fully developed man, the Christian warrior; and lastly, the further progress towards the angelic nature which the prophet's eye may discern in the future, in which men will no longer need to contend as warriors, but will rise as on wings towards the great spiritual ideals. No poet has expressed more strongly than Tennyson the belief in a progress upwards of the human race towards a goal far higher than any yet attained. Refer, for example, to the concluding stanzas of *In Memoriam*, where he speaks of

> 'those who eye to eye shall look
> On knowledge; under whose command
> Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand
> Is Nature like an open book;
>
> No longer half-akin to brute,
> For all we thought and loved and did,
> And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed
> Of what in them is flower and fruit.'

238. **mould**, 'shape,' from Old French *molle* (Mod. *moule*), Latin *modulus*, dimin. of *modus*, measure. The *d* of 'mould' was added in English, and does not belong to the stem.

241. **eastward**: as if to catch the first rays of the rising sun, the first manifestations of the divine purpose, and reflect them

on his people, while the wings point to the one unmoving point in the heavens, the pole-star of duty.

244. **hordes**, see note on l. 479.

247. **Broader and higher** etc. The redundance of syllables and the rapid pulsation of the rhythm mark the enthusiasm of the speaker.

248. **blazon**, *i.e.* represent in colours. In Old French *blason* means a shield, then a coat of arms painted upon a shield; and so in Old English 'blazon' means shield, and 'to blazon' is to describe a shield which bears a coat of arms, as in Scott, *Quentin Durward* (when Rouge Sanglier is being examined in heraldry), 'Show him a coat, and let him blazon it his own way.' It is said to come from the German *blasen*, to blow the trumpet, hence, to proclaim a victory, but the history of the word does not seem quite clear. Tennyson uses it in the meaning 'to colour' or 'to figure in colours,' either of shields and coats of arms, or, as here, of stained glass windows: cp. *Gareth and Lynette*, 398, "Some blazon'd, some but carven, and some blank" (of shields); and 405, 'His arms were blazon'd also'; *The Daisy*, 58, 'The giant windows' blazon'd fires'; and *In Memoriam*, 77, 8, 'The prophets blazon'd on the panes.' The correct use of the word would seem to be in connection with famous deeds celebrated either by pictures or by painted symbols.

249. **the board**, 'the table' at which they ate.

250. **the twelve great battles** are enumerated by Lancelot in *Lancelot and Elaine*, 285 ff. They are taken from Nennius, *History of the Britons*, 49, the twelve battles being those fought against the heathen Saxons:—

> 'And Lancelot spoke
> And answer'd him at full, as having been
> With Arthur in the fight which all day long
> Rang by the white mouth of the violent Glem;
> And in the four loud-battles by the shore
> Of Duglas; that on Bassa; then the war
> That thunder'd in and out the gloomy skirts
> Of Celidon the forest; and again
> By castle Gurnion, where the glorious King
> Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's Head,
> Carved of one emerald center'd in a sun
> Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he breathed;
> And at Caerleon had he help'd his lord,
> When the strong neighings of the wild white Horse
> Set every gilded parapet shuddering;
> And up in Agned-Cathregonion too,
> And down the waste sand-shores of Trath Treroit,
> Where many a heathen fell; "and on the mount

Of Badon I myself beheld the King
Charge at the head of all his Table Round,
And all his legions crying Christ and him,
And break them."'

Mr. Elsdale remarks, 'All the light inside streams through the twelve great battles of the King, showing that the inner light of the soul's life is derived from conflict.'—*Studies in the Idylls*, p. 56.

252. **mere**, 'lake,' the original English word, whereas 'lake' and 'pool' are both from Latin.

253. **Where Arthur finds** etc. For this scene see *The Passing of Arthur*, 196 :—

'for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I row'd across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king.'

This window is towards the rising of the sun, as the other towards its setting, symbolising the beginning and the end of Arthur's course, which is often in the *Idylls* connected with the course of the sun either through the day or through the year : cp. note on l. 179.

the brand Excalibur : 'brand,' which means properly a burning piece of wood, is used poetically in English (as *brandr* in Icelandic) for 'sword,' from its blade flashing like fire. The word is especially appropriate to Excalibur : see the description of it in the *Coming of Arthur*, 297 ff. :—

'rich
With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,
Bewildering heart and eye—the blade so bright
That men are blinded by it—on one side,
Graven in the oldest tongue of all this world,
"Take me," but turn the blade and ye shall see,
And written in the speech ye speak yourself,
"Cast me away."'

Cp. *Passing of Arthur*, 220 ff., and Malory, *Morte Darthur*, 1, 23. It had the property of cutting through steel or iron, and the scabbard preserved its wearer from being wounded in battle. The idea of enchanted weapons is common in medieval romance, and many of the heroes' swords have names, as Orlando's *Durindana*, Charlemagne's *Joyeuse*, and the Cid's *Colada*.

254. **counter**, opposite.

255. **blank : and who shall blazon it?** For this use of the words 'blank' and 'blazon' cp. *Gareth and Lynette*, 398 :—

'Some blazon'd, some but carven, and some blank.'

For 'blazon' see note on l. 248; 'blank' means properly white, but it is used as a term of heraldry for a shield which has no arms upon it.

256. **O there, perchance** etc. The final casting away of Excalibur after all the wars were done, was a scene which might be anticipated from the writing upon the sword and from Merlin's words about it, see *Coming of Arthur*, 306:—

'Take thou and strike! the time to cast away
Is yet far off.'

For the casting away of Excalibur, see *The Passing of Arthur*, 195-329.

Several points in the description of Arthur's hall suggest the idea that the chapel of King's College, Cambridge, may have been in the poet's mind. The twelve great stained glass windows through which streams the light that falls upon the board, answer to the twelve windows along the south side of the chapel, through which the sun shines, and the other two windows to the east and to the west, the one blazoned and the other blank, have also their counterpart in the chapel (or had till a few years since). The epithet 'long-vaulted,' used of the hall in *Gareth and Lynette*, is very appropriate to the chapel.

261. Notice the fine rhythm and alliteration of this line: 'unremorseful' means pitiless, as 'remorse' in older English often means pity: cf. Shaksp. *Two Gent. of Verona*, 4, 3, 13,—

'Valiant, wise, remorseful, well accomplished.'

Measure for Measure, 2, 2, 54,—

'If so your heart were touch'd with that remorse.'

262. **in he rode.** The entrance was high enough to allow a rider to enter without grazing his crest: see note on l. 225.

263. **The golden dragon** was the symbol of sovereignty among the Britons, and is said to have been borne especially by Uther the father of Arthur, who had the title Pendragon (supposed to mean 'dragon's head'). Geoffrey of Monmouth tells a story about an appearance in the heaven which caused him to adopt it as his crest (*Hist. Brit.* 8, 14-17). In the *Idylls* Arthur bears the golden dragon as crest, and it appears generally as his symbol: see *Lancelot and Elaine*, 426 ff.:—

'easily to be known,
Since to his crown the golden dragon clung,
And down his robe the dragon writhed in gold,
And from the carven-work behind him crept
Two dragons gilded, sloping down to make
Arms for his chair, while all the rest of them
Thro' knots and loops and folds innumerable
Fled ever thro' the woodwork.'

The 'double-dragon'd chair' appears again in *The Last Tournament*, and in *Guinevere*, 394, we hear of

> 'The Dragon of the great Pendragonship,
> That crown'd the state pavilion of the King,'

and again of Arthur's helmet,—

> 'To which for crest the golden dragon clung
> Of Britain.'

The ship also which appeared far out upon the deep that night when Arthur was borne in on the waves, a naked babe, to Merlin's feet, was in the form of 'a dragon wing'd.'

264. **the hold**, *i.e.* the stronghold mentioned in l. 207.

265. **sear'd** means properly dried, hence scorched. It is the same word as 'sere,' meaning withered, from Anglo-Saxon *seárian*, to dry up.

266. **in among bright faces.** The contrast is finely suggested between those who came in grimed and scorched, with marks of the fight upon them, and the bright faces, full of enthusiasm, of those in the hall. It is the contrast which lies at the root of this idyll, between practical work and visionary ideals.

267. **prest.** This is the form of spelling used by Tennyson, perhaps after the example of Spenser. He has also 'past,' 'vext,' 'slipt,' 'fixt,' 'crost,' and a few others, but he does not follow Spenser in writing 'kist,' 'flockt,' 'chaft,' etc. Notice that in 'prest,' 'crost,' and 'past' (as also in 'kist'), the 's' becomes single.

269. For the parenthesis see notes on ll. 21, 541.

270. **protesting**, *i.e.* declaring their readiness to undertake the Quest.

275. **Darken**: the repetition of this word in this position throws great weight upon it. The position is the same as that noted with reference to l. 82, but here we have the additional effect of repetition. The King's dislike for unpractical heroism comes out also in *Geraint and Enid*, where he implies clearly his greater admiration for the work of Edyrn wrought upon himself than for the exploits of Geraint.

279. **and hast not** etc.: 'and' means here 'and yet.'

280. **Nay, lord.** This seems partly a protest against the tone of raillery which Arthur uses, as in *Gareth and Lynette*, 42, 'Nay, nay, good mother'; but the same expression is used afterwards as a simple negative, l. 285.

287. **What go ye into the wilderness to see**: a reference to the words of Jesus Christ in reference to John the Baptist, *Gospel of St. Matthew*, 11, 7:—'What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?' It is suggested that those

who went into the wilderness to hear John the Baptist knew at least that they were going out to see a prophet, but these know nothing. They have seen a cloud and they go forth to pursue it.

289. **Shrilling**: a favourite word with Tennyson (as with Spenser), and used of the trumpet, as in *Sir Galahad*, 5,

'The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,'

of the lark's song, in *Princess*, 7, 31,—

'the lark
Shot up and shrill'd in flickering gyres,'

or of the human voice, either indignant, as in *Gareth and Lynette*, 732,—

'shrilling, Hence
Avoid, thou smellest all of kitchen-grease,'

or full of passionate emotion, as in *Lancelot and Elaine*, 1020,—

'the blood-red light of dawn
Flared on her face, she shrilling, Let me die,'

or finally, as here, high-pitched so as to be heard along the hall.

292. **O Galahad, and O Galahad**: intensity is added by this form of repetition with 'and.'

297. **maim**, 'hurt,' with the idea of mutilation by cutting off limbs or rendering them useless. It comes through French, perhaps from Celtic. He foresees that the Order will be crippled by this enterprise, in which so many members of it will be lost.

298. **But ye, that** etc. The construction is broken off, and resumed again in l. 305. The whole passage may be paraphrased thus:—'When the bard Taliessin sings, all the rest are moved to imitation, and all imagine that if he can sing so may they: when Lancelot overcomes five knights at once, every young and unproved knight thinks that he may do the like, until by experience he learns: and so ye, because Galahad has seen, think that ye may all likewise see. But what are ye? Not Galahads, no, nor even Percivales, but men with hands indeed and hearts to right the wrong and to lay violence low, but as to spiritual insight, for the most part blind.'

follow but the leader's bell: the metaphor is from a flock of sheep rushing senselessly after their leader, who bears the bell.

300. **Taliessin** is the most famous of the ancient Welsh poets, and belongs to about the year 500 A.D. A good many poems are extant under his name, but it is uncertain how far they are genuine.

our fullest throat of song, *i.e.* 'he among us who sings with fullest throat': a 'full-throated' singer would be one from whom the song flowed in ample stream.

301. **will sing**, *i.e.* 'desire to sing,' or perhaps more strongly,

'are determined to sing': 'the dumb' are those to whom no power of song has been given.

304. **Unproven**, *i.e.* while yet untried.

305. **by one**, emphatic, opposed to the five at once for whom Lancelot is a match.

310. **sudden heads of violence**, that is, the violent risings which men make from time to time against law: 'sudden' because liable to come at any time, without notice. To 'make head' is to gather scattered forces into one, especially for the purpose of insurrection: so in *The Coming of Arthur*, 67,—

'for most of these ... Made head against him.'

312. **The strong White Horse** is the power of the Saxons, whose emblem was the White Horse, as the Dragon was the emblem of the Britons and the Raven of the Danes: cp. *Lancelot and Elaine*, 298:—

'the strong neighings of the wild White Horse,'

and *Guinevere*, 15:—

'the Lords of the White Horse,
Heathen, the brood of Hengist left.'

313. An echo of l. 301, pointing the parallel more strongly. As when Taliessin sings all the rest who cannot sing, 'all the dumb,' try to emulate him, so when Galahad sees a spiritual vision, all the rest, who have no spiritual sight, 'all the blind,' think that they also may see it.

315. **Yet—for ye know** etc.: a characteristic use of 'for': cp. *Gareth and Lynette*, 330:—

'Yet, for the field was pleasant in our eyes,
We yielded not,'

and 387:—

'And, for himself was of the greater state,
Being a king, he trusted' etc.;

so in Spenser, *Faery Queen*, 2, 3, 5:—

'But, for in Court gay portance he perceived
And gallant show to be in greatest gree,
Eftsoons to Court he cast t' advance his first degree.'

Cp. ll. 22, 541.

318. **This chance**, that is, the chance afforded by the fact that all complaints of oppression and wrong are brought to this hall.

319. **Unchallenged**, 'unclaimed': a challenge is originally an accusation, from Old French *chalonge*, Latin *calumnia*, hence a dispute or claim.

follow wandering fires. The metaphor is from the *ignis fatuus* which plays over swamps and stagnant water, and some-

times leads travellers into the quagmire. The 'wandering fire' in this case is not the vision of the Grail, but the false objects of pursuit, which those will probably go after who have vowed themselves to the Quest without having the necessary qualifications. The Grail itself, wherever it appears, is a true guiding light.

320. **quagmire**, originally 'quake-mire,' a shaking bog.

324. **gracious pastime**: the pastime of the tournament, which was adorned with the grace of chivalry.

328. This line occurs twice, with slight variations, in *Lancelot and Elaine*, and we have also in *Gareth and Lynette*, 1386:—

'Then sprang the happier day from underground':

so also below, l. 338.

329. **closed** in combat.

333. **for a strength** etc., cp. note on l. 315. The *Morte Darthur* has it thus:—'Then Sir Galahad dressed him in the midst of the meadow, and began to break spears marvellously, that all men had wonder of him, for he there surmounted all other knights, for within a while he had thrown down many good knights of the Table Round, save twain, that was Sir Launcelot and Sir Percivale.' But in this account the tournament came before the vision.

336. **in their heat**, in the heat of their excitement and enthusiasm.

338. **But when the next day** etc. The construction thus begun is broken off by the exclamation 'O brother,' etc., and not resumed, the form of the sentence being changed.

339. **had you known**: cp. ll. 225 and 246.

340. **Built by old kings** etc.: cp. the description in *Gareth and Lynette*, 296:—

'Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces
And stately, rich in emblem and the work
Of ancient kings who did their days in stone.'

age after age, that is, not of one age, but added to successively by age after age.

342. Cp. l. 228.

343. **Totter'd toward each other.** The idea is of houses with each story projecting beyond that below it, so as to overhang the street, as we see in some old English houses. Here the roofs of the houses on opposite sides of the street have the appearance of tumbling towards each other, and the upper stories approach so closely that the faces of those looking out of the windows of them almost meet.

346. **galleries**: these would be balconies resting upon projecting stone supports which were carved into fantastic figures of dragons. The word 'weigh'd' adds to the effect of the expression 'lady-laden.'

347. **crazy**, being so old that it might be feared they would fall (l. 341). The word 'crazy' is connected with 'crack,' and means properly 'full of cracks': cp. Chaucer, *Canon's Yeoman's Tale*, 215:—

> 'I am right siker that the pot was crased.'

348. **drops from thunder**, 'drops of a thunder-shower.'

350. **On wyvern** etc. These would be the shapes of the carving with which stones projecting at the corners of the houses or elsewhere were adorned. A 'wyvern' is a two-legged dragon used in heraldry, from Old French *wivre* (Modern *givre*), a viper, Latin *vipera*.

griffin: in decorative art and heraldry a griffin or griffon is an animal with the body and feet of a lion and the head and beak of an eagle. The word comes through French *griffon*, Low Latin *griffus*, Lat. *gryphus*, from Greek γρύψ, a griffon, such for instance as those which guarded the gold in the regions of the Ural Mountains, as related (but not vouched for) by Herodotus.

353. **The knights and ladies wept** etc.: cp. *Morte Darthur*, 13, 8:—'And so they mounted upon their horses and rode through the streets of Camelot, and there was weeping of the rich and poor, and the king turned away and might not speak for weeping.' The queen, however, had departed to her chamber 'so that no man might perceive her great sorrows.'

358. **the Gate of the three Queens**. This gate is described in *Gareth and Lynette*, 209-226:—

> 'And there was no gate like it under heaven.
> For barefoot on the keystone, which was lined
> And rippled like an ever-fleeting wave,
> The Lady of the Lake stood: all her dress
> Wept from her sides as water flowing away;
> But like the cross her great and goodly arms
> Stretch'd under all the cornice and upheld:
> And drops of water fell from either hand;
> And down from one a sword was hung, from one
> A censer, either worn with wind and storm;
> And o'er her breast floated the sacred fish;
> And in the space to left of her, and right,
> Were Arthur's wars in weird devices done,
> New things and old co-twisted, as if time
> Were nothing, so inveterately, that men
> Were giddy gazing there; and over all

High on the top were those three Queens, the friends
Of Arthur, who should help him at his need.'

It is mentioned also in *Lancelot and Elaine*, as

'the strange-statued gate,
Where Arthur's wars were render'd mystically.'

359. **render'd**, *i.e.* represented.

361 ff. For the symbolism contained in the story of Percivale's Quest, see Introduction.

362. **the lists** are the boundaries set round the space in which tournaments were held, from Old French *lisse*, 'a list or tilt-yard' (Modern *lice*), Low Latin *licia*, barriers, perhaps from Lat. *licium*, a thread or small girdle (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*). The *t* is added in English.

365. That is, he saw all things bright around him, because of his own exhilaration.

370. **like a driving gloom**, that is, like dark clouds or mist driving over a clear sky.

371-373. Observe the monotony of form in these lines: see note on ll. 234-237, and cp. such passages as *The Princess*, 4, 285 ff.:—

'And partly that I hoped to win you back,
And partly conscious of my own deserts,
And partly that you were my civil head,
And chiefly you were born for something great.' etc.

380. **deep lawns** would be lawns with deep grass: 'lawn' (in Older English 'laund,' as in Shaksp. 3 *Henry VI.* 3, 1, 2: 'For through this laund anon the deer will come') is from French *lande*, and means originally a grassy plain or space in a forest.

381. **sharp**, 'steep': the effect of the steep descent of the water was to produce a back wave at the bottom, which played back on the slope with curling white upon its crest.

crisping, *i.e.* 'curling,' Latin *crispus*. For the use of the word here cf. Shaksp. 1 *Henry IV.* 1, 3, 106, where it is said of the river Severn that he 'hid his crisp head in the hollow bank.'

383. **took**, 'took captive,' that is, captivated or charmed with the pleasantness of its sound and the beauty of its aspect: so in Shaksp. *Winter's Tale*, 4, 4, 119:—

'daffodils
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty.'

389. **Fell into dust**, that is, the pleasures of sense prove to be unsatisfying, there is no true refreshment for the soul in them, he is left thirsting.

395. **as who should say**, 'as one who said,' *i.e.* as if she were saying.

397. **Fell into dust**. The pleasures of home and the family prove to be equally unsatisfying to the soul.

399. **And in it a dead babe**. There is indicated here perhaps those visitations of death which turn the joy of home into a sorrow, and bring to us a sense that no happiness which depends on human life can be secure. Nay, if we strive to allay our soul's thirst with the thought and the memory of those whom we have lost, we find that even this fails us :—

'and also this
Fell into dust, and I was left alone.'

403. **plowshare**. Tennyson varies between 'plough' and 'plow,' as do also the older English writers. In Chaucer, for example, both are found.

409. **on me**, that is 'towards me' as an enemy.

411. **casque**, 'helmet,' French *casque*, from Italian *casco*. The original sense is 'husk.' cp. Spanish *casco*, whence comes 'cask.'

413. **And on the splendour came** etc. This is the glory of wealth, before which the world prostrates itself. It inspires fear and shrinking at first, then it attracts men to its embrace, and finally, like the rest, falls into dust and fails to satisfy the soul. The personification may be compared with that in *Gareth and Lynette*, 1000 ff., where the 'Noonday sun' represents something of the same kind, and appears 'all in mail Burnish'd to blinding.'

419 f. Observe the repetition of the same or nearly the same form of expression after each event : the effect is to emphasise very strongly the monotony of repeated disillusion.

420. **wearying** : for this intransitive use of the word, cp. *Lancelot and Elaine*, 894 :—'till the car Wearies to hear it.'

422. **the spires Prick'd .. into heaven** : cp. *Gareth and Lynette*, 190 :—

'At times the spires and turrets half-way down
Prick'd thro' the mist.'

incredible, *i.e.* of incredible height : cp. *Voyage of Maeldune*, 16 :—

'And the pine shot aloft from the crag to an unbelievable height.'

427. **And glad was I** etc. There presents itself to him the vision of political ambition, the prospect of influencing society as a ruler willingly accepted and readily obeyed.

clomb, a favourite form with Tennyson, as *e.g. Gareth and Lynette*, 56 :—

'and so the boy,
Sweet mother, neither clomb nor brake his neck;'

Princess, 7, 16:—

'but oft
Clomb to the roof and gazed aloft for hours
On that disastrous leaguer.'

It is also used by Spenser, *e.g. Faery Queene*, 1, 10, 49:—

'And asked, to what end they clomb that tedious height.'

Tennyson however has 'climbed' often enough. Similarly he has both 'holp' and 'helped,' 'wrought' and 'worked.'

429. **a ruinous city**, *i.e.* 'a city in ruins'; so in *Marriage of Geraint*, 315:—'He look'd and saw that all was ruinous.'

436. **Fell into dust.** This, too, fails to satisfy the soul's thirst; the fair city and the citizens who welcomed him as their ruler will pass away, and of his work nothing will remain; or if anything remains, yet he who brought it about will be clean forgotten.

440. **dropt**, 'descended,' implying perhaps that the descent was steep. He descends from the height of his ambition into the valley of humilation beyond.

447. **For when the Lord of all things** etc.: there is perhaps a reminiscence of St. Paul's *Epistle to the Philippians*, 2, 5:—'Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and ... he humbled himself becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross.'

448. **for His mortal change**, *i.e.* for His change into the form of mortal man.

452 f. The reference is to the *Gospel of St. Matthew*, 2, 1-12. The star which led them was humility, for they submitted their gray-hair'd wisdom to the teaching of others, and presented their rich gifts to the King who was found in so mean a dwelling.

like a flying star, that is, in the likeness of a star which moved before them. For this meaning of 'like,' cp. Shaksp. *Tempest*, 2. 2, 9:—

'Sometime like apes that mow and chatter at me,' etc.

455. **of thy prowess and thy sins**: the reference is to ll. 361-378. Even his thought of his sins was a sign that he wanted true humility, for he was still taken up with himself, he had not yet 'lost himself to save himself.'

457. **As Galahad**: see l. 178 and note.

458. Notice the rhythm: the words 'suddenly Galahad shone,' six syllables equivalent in the verse to four, followed by the em-

phatic monosyllable 'shone,' give the effect of abruptness to the appearance.

461. **slaked my burning thirst.** The thirst is a spiritual one, and to be slaked by spiritual ministerings.

462. **sacring.** 'consecrating,' taken from the *Morte Darthur*, 17, 20 (quoted below): in Shaksp. *Henry VIII.* 3, 2, 295, we have 'the sacring bell.' Both this word and 'sacred' came from the Old English, *sacren*, French *sacrer*. The consecrating of the mass is the ceremony by which the elements of bread and wine are thought to be miraculously changed in substance, though not in outward appearance, into the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

466. **I saw the fiery face** etc. The origin of this is in *Morte Darthur*, 17, 20, where however the accompanying circumstances are different:—'And then the bishop made semblant as though he would have gone to the sacring of the mass. And then he took an ubbly, which was made in likeness of bread; and at the lifting up there came a figure in likeness of a child, and the visage was as red and as bright as any fire, and smote himself into the bread, so that they all saw it, that the bread was formed of a fleshly man, and then he put it into the holy vessel again. And then he did that longed to a priest to do to a mass. And then he went to Galahad, and kissed him, and bad him go and kiss his fellows, and so he did anon.' (An 'ubbly' is a cake of bread, such as was used for the sacrament.)

468 ff. With this passage about the visions by which Galahad is accompanied and the strength which he derives from them, compare the fine lyric of Tennyson's earlier days, *Sir Galahad*:—

> 'My good blade carves the casques of men,
> My tough lance thrusteth sure,
> My strength is as the strength of ten,
> Because my heart is pure.'

and with reference to the vision of the Grail:—

> 'Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
> I find a magic bark;
> I leap on board: no helmsman steers:
> I float till all is dark.
> A gentle sound, an awful light!
> Three angels bear the holy Grail:
> With folded feet, in stoles of white,
> On sleeping wings they sail.
> Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
> My spirit beats her mortal bars,
> As down dark tides the glory slides,
> And star-like mingles with the stars.'

473. **Blood-red.** The repetition of this word at the beginning of four successive lines, followed in each case by a pause, is the

most striking example to be found in Tennyson (or probably elsewhere) of this method of emphasis. In some other passages we may have a greater number of repetitions, as in Shaksp. 3 *Henry VI.* 2, 5, 25 ff. :—

> 'Thereby to see the minutes how they run,
> How many make the hour full complete ;
> How many hours bring about the day ;
> How many days will finish up the year ;
> How many years a mortal man may live.
> When this is known, then to divide the times :
> So many hours must I tend my flock ;
> So many hours must I take my rest ;'

and so on for five lines more ; but the effect of emphasis is hardly so great as we have here, and the intention is rather to suggest monotony. What we have here is a special form of that kind of repetition which has often been pointed out as characteristic of the poet : the nearest parallels are in *The Marriage of Geraint*, 50 ff., where the words 'Forgetful of' are repeated at the beginning of five successive lines, and *Enoch Arden*, 590 ff. :—

> 'The blaze upon the waters to the east ;
> The blaze upon his island overhead ;
> The blaze upon the waters to the west' :

where however the object is not only to emphasise the expression but to give the effect of monotony. Cp. notes on ll. 103, 234, 371.

473. **sliding down the blacken'd marsh** : so in the passage of *Sir Galahad* quoted above :—

> 'As down dark tides the glory slides,'

The marsh is blackened by the darkness of night.

478. **Pagan** is from Latin *paganus*, a villager, which was a name given about the fourth century of our era to those not converted to Christianity, because the inhabitants of the villages and country places remained longest unconverted ; 'ex locorum agrestium compitis et pagis pagani vocantur,' says Orosius.

479. **clash'd**, properly of sound, hence of dashing together in combat : cp. the *Ode on the Death of Wellington*, 100 :—

> 'This is he that far away
> Against the myriads of Assaye
> Clash'd with his fiery few and won.'

hordes : the word comes through French from Turkish *ordú*, a camp, and hence a wandering tribe, especially of Tartars (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*).

481. **hard**, 'close,' as in 'hard by.'

482. Cp. l. 161.

485. **his eye** ... **Drew me** etc. : so Galahad himself had been

moved by the deathless passion in the eyes of the maiden, Percivale's sister, l. 163 :—

'She sent the deathless passion in her eyes
Thro' him, and made him hers, and laid her mind
On him, and he believed in her belief.'

489. **none but man**. The mountain is a spiritual one, representing that struggle through which the soul of man passes before attaining to its rest.

490. **Scarr'd**, *i.e.* marked as with ancient wounds.

wintry water-courses, because they are torrent beds down which water flows in winter only : so the Greek word χειμάρρους, which means 'winter-flowing,' is used for a torrent stream.

491. **Storm** : notice the emphasis which this word gains by its position at the beginning of the line and the repetition of it at the end.

492. **glanced ... and gloom'd**, 'flashed bright and again darkened' : the same alliterative contrast occurs in *The Brook*, 174 : -

'I slip, I glide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows.'

The verb 'gloom' is used by Tennyson both in a transitive and an intransitive sense ; so we have in *Merlin and Vivien*, 325 :—

'Such a mood as that, which lately gloom'd
Your fancy.'

495. **Struck** : for the position of this word cp. l. 82 etc.

502. **link'd with many a bridge**, that is, the piers are linked together by the arches, which go from one to the other of them.

503. **piers** are properly masses of stone ; Old French *piere* (Mod. *pierre*), Lat. *petra*, from Greek πέτρα, rock. Hence the piers of a bridge are the massive stone structures which support the arches. The word means also a structure which runs out into the sea, because masses of stone are naturally used for that purpose.

the great Sea ; that 'boundless deep,' whence the spirit drew at birth and to which it returns at death.

506. **yearn'd**, 'eagerly desired' : the word is English in its origin, from Anglo-Saxon *georn*, 'desirous.' In Chaucer the Pardoner says of his preaching :—

'Myn hondes and my tonge goon so yerne,
That it is joye to ze my bisynesse' ;

where 'yerne' means 'eagerly,' and so 'actively' : cp. Germ. *gern*. (The word 'yearn,' to grieve, is a different word, a misspelling of 'earn,' chiefly found in modern editions of Shakspeare.)

508. **Open'd and blazed with thunder.** The opening of the heavens is the effect of the lightning-flash, after which comes the roar of the thunder. I am disposed to think that the word 'blazed' has reference here rather to the sound than to the light. It is associated with the sound both here and in l. 516, and might be understood as applying to the blast, like that of a trumpet, which the thunder gave. Chaucer has 'blasen' for 'blow' of a trumpet, and 'blare,' a collateral form of 'blaze,' is several times used by Tennyson. The word 'blaze' in both its meanings comes from the stem of 'blow': cp. Germ. *bläsen*.

509. **Shoutings of all the sons of God**: a reminiscence of the passage in the Bible, *Job*, 38. 7:—'When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.'

and first, *i.e.* when the heavens opened for the first time and blazed with thunder.

513. **white samite**: samite is a rich silk tissue, the word being derived, through French, from Low Latin *examitum*, which comes from Greek ἑξάμιτον, meaning stuff woven with six kinds of thread in the woof (ἑξ, six; μιτος, thread of the woof); cp. 'dimity,' which is properly stuff woven with two kinds of thread. In the Arthurian romances samite stands for the richest and finest kind of stuff. The Lady of the Lake, who gave Excalibur to Arthur, was clothed in white samite (*Coming of Arthur*, 284); in *Lancelot and Elaine* the King is 'Robed in red samite,' and Elaine's funeral barge is 'Pall'd all its length in blackest samite.' According to the *Morte Darthur* the Grail at its first appearance in Arthur's hall was covered with white samite.

516. **again**, that is, for the second time. Observe the effect of the word 'Roaring' at the beginning of the next line, with a pause after it: cp. the similar position of 'Opening' in l. 524.

517. **like a silver star**: this comparison occurs each time of Galahad's appearance; first, l. 511, 'In silver-shining armour starry-clear,' next in this line, and thirdly in l. 524, 'I saw the least of little stars.'

522. **For now I knew**, referring to the words 'a joy to me' in the line before.

523. **when they blazed again**: this is the third time of the 'thrice' spoken of in l. 507.

524. **the least of little stars**: that is, Galahad and his boat, if boat it were, now seemed like a very small star in the distance.

525. **Down on the waste**: that is, on the great Sea, the waste of waters.

527. **in a glory**, *i.e.* surrounded by an aureole of light, like the halo of so-called glory round the head of a saint. With this passage compare the description of the New Jerusalem in the

Bible, *Revelation*, 21. 10 ff. :—'and he shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates ... and the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl.'

528. For the parenthesis, cp. notes on ll. 21 and 541.

the goal of all the saints, *i.e.* that towards which all the saints strive.

529. **Strike from the sea**: the metaphor is of bright rays striking upwards or downwards from the sun or other luminary.

534. **the deathful ridge** is the hill described in ll. 489 ff.

539. **To whence I came**, an elliptical expression, such as we have in *Gareth and Lynette*, 548 :—'make demand Of whom ye gave me to'; and 607 :—'she will not wed Save whom she loveth.'

the gate of Arthur's wars: see note on l. 358.

540 ff. The contrast afforded by this homely utterance to the magnificent passage which goes before it, has the effect of relieving the tension of feeling, and serves as a transition to the other incidents of the Quest, which otherwise might make something of an anticlimax. At the same time the naturalness and realism of the description heightens the effect of the mystic ecstasy which precedes it. We have the everyday affairs of common life set against the miraculous visions of spiritual enthusiasm, so as to suggest, though on a lower plane of feeling, the same thought to which Arthur gives utterance at the end of the idyll, namely that the doing of the day's work in the allotted field is the first duty of each, whatever visions may come after.

Observe the disjointed style of the simple monk, who hardly ever finishes a sentence, but links another on to it or breaks it off altogether before it is done. He is a genuinely dramatic creation.

540. **for in sooth** etc. It seems as if he would have said, 'O brother, I may well believe this tale, for these ancient books are full of such miracles.' The mention of the books however leads him off to the thought of how his head was wont to swim in reading them, and how he went down then to the little thorpe and concerned himself with the small things of village life, which are tacitly contrasted with the great and miraculous adventures of the Quest. He then resumes with 'O brother,' and this time asks a question, 'Came ye on none but phantoms?'

Tennyson's free use of the word 'for' in introducing reasons by anticipation, and also at the beginning of a narrative, is deserving of notice: cp. note on l. 315, and such passages as

Coming of Arthur, 184: —'Sir, for ye know that in King Uther's time' etc.

540. **in sooth**, 'in truth': see note on l. 706.

541. **These ancient books**, *i.e.* those mentioned in l. 59.

they would win thee, that is, they would win thy heart, be pleasing to thee; so the adjective 'winning' means attractive.

teem .. With miracles etc. The parenthesis, 'Only I find not' etc., is characteristically thrown in where there is no natural pause, separating words which are closely connected with one another. The result is often to give a more dramatic effect to the words spoken: cp. ll. 22, 269, 315, 528 of this idyll; *Gareth and Lynette*, 131:—

> 'So that ye yield me—I will walk thro' fire,
> Mother, to gain it—your full leave to go';

and often elsewhere.

teem, 'abound': the proper meaning of the word is 'to be prolific,' from the Old English *tem*, meaning progeny, or rather a succession of children, the same word as 'team,' used of animals harnessed one behind the other (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*).

544. **Not all unlike**, *i.e.* like to these, or at least not very unlike; the qualification is something like that in l. 500:—

> 'A great black swamp and of an evil smell,
> Part black, part whitened' etc.

545. 'I who cannot read with ease except in my breviary.' The **breviary** is the prayer-book of the Roman Church, from Latin *breviarium*, a short summary (*brevis*, short), hence a manual, especially of prayers.

546. **Till my head swims** belongs to 'oftentimes I read,' two lines above. He means, till he is dizzy and the words float unsteadily before his eyes.

547. **thorpe**, 'village,' cp. German *dorf*: it is the original English word, 'village' and 'hamlet,' coming both through French. The word 'thorpe' is found in many English local names, especially in the Midland Counties, as Althorpe, Ullesthorpe, Caythorpe, Countesthorpe etc.

548. It is of course the village which is 'almost plaster'd like a martin's nest' to the walls of the monastery, a remark which would be hardly worth making if the line had not been (apparently) misunderstood by Mr. Hutton (*Literary Essays*, p. 415). Villages naturally grew up round monasteries, and therefore the comparison of this little thorpe to a martin's nest of clay fastened against the walls of a house is quite appropriate as well as picturesque. The martin is that small species of swallow which builds a closed nest of clay attached to a rock or to the wall of a house. The name is the familiar French proper name *Martin*,

applied as a nickname (like 'robin') to a bird which is familiar round the house.

552. **homely**, 'simple.'

553. **gossip** means originally 'related in God' (from 'sib,' related), and those persons were called gossips who were connected by the spiritual kinship between sponsor and child in baptism, or between persons who were sponsors for the same child. Then the word was used for familiar acquaintances, and hence came the verb 'to gossip,' meaning to converse about trivial things, as with a familiar acquaintance. This verb is as old as Shakspeare, who in *Mids. Night's Dream*, 2, 1, 125 has :—

'Full often hath she gossip'd by my side.'

From this comes gossip in the sense of idle conversation, especially of a rather scandalous kind. So Tennyson in *Enoch Arden*, 332 :—

'Fearing the lazy gossip of the port.'

Here gossip means simply trivial talk, and the succeeding lines give the various subjects of it, 'ills and aches, and teethings, lyings in' etc.

554. **lyings in**, that is, women being brought to bed for the birth of children.

556. The mirth is purely local, referring to persons and things of the village, and meaningless for all who lived outside.

557. **Or lulling** etc., must be taken with what follows, 'Rejoice' etc. He means, 'Or, acting as peacemaker when quarrels arise in the chafferings at the market-cross, I rejoice, small man that I am, in my small world.'

random squabbles are quarrels made at hazard, without care or thought. The Old French *randon* properly means the force and swiftness of a stream, then haste or impetuosity (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*).

558. **Chafferings and chatterings**, in apposition to 'random squabbles,' meaning that it is in these that the quarrels mostly consist. 'Chaffering' means bargaining, connected with 'cheap,' 'chapman,' etc.

the market-cross. It was the custom in English towns to erect stone structures, surmounted by a cross, in the market-place, which served as stands for preaching, and to remind men of religion in the ordinary transactions of life. Sometimes these had a vaulted space below, which was used as a shelter during rain. Fine examples exist at Bristol, Winchester, Malmesbury, etc.

559. **small man**, *i.e.* 'small man that I am,' so in *The Marriage of Geraint*, 116 :—

'For all my pains, poor man, for all my pains,
She is not faithful to me.'

567. **falter'd**: 'to falter' means properly to totter; here 'falter'd from my quest' means 'proved false to my quest.'

569. **eft** is a loose popular term for lizards or newts, especially the latter, which are animals of the frog kind closely resembling lizards.

570. **burdock** is the plant that produces those flower-heads commonly called 'burs,' which stick so readily to the clothes of passers-by. It stands here for any coarse weed.

wan And meagre, 'pale and thin.'

574. **I made**, *i.e.* 'I made my way,' 'went.' This temptation, to which Percivale so nearly falls a victim, is a refined version of one which occurs in several of the Percivale romances; see *Morte Darthur*, 14, 9, where he is saved by seeing his sword lying naked on the ground, in whose pommel there was a red cross and the sign of the crucifix therein. The love of woman, which is here set forth as a nearly successful rival of the religious enthusiasm, appears as no phantom but a reality: it does not disappear and fall into dust like the rest of the objects of desire which had presented themselves, but has to be cast off by main force if it is not to absorb all the spiritual strength which should be offered up to heaven.

591. **I walking** etc. So in *The Marriage of Geraint*, 70,—'they sleeping each by either'; and 147, —'he sitting high in hall.'

597. **Then I remember'd** etc. The remembrance of Arthur's warning words made him feel that he was one of those who were destined to failure, and therefore the Quest faded from his heart. This at least which he had found was no wandering fire, and for a time his spiritual nature was satisfied with it.

599. **Anon**, 'straightway,' from Anglo-Saxon *on*, in, and *án*, one, meaning 'in one (moment).'

601. **supplication** originally means bending down, and is therefore literally appropriate of the knees and metaphorically of the tongue.

606. **O me, my brother**: an exclamation called forth by the thought how hard the trial was, and how for the time he was overcome by it.

609. **all but her**: another proof of the power and reality of this influence upon him, and of its difference from the phantoms.

611. Observe how the rhythm is varied and improved by the use of 'upon' instead of 'on'; cp. ll. 743, 774 etc.

612. **yule** is Christmas: the origin of the word is quite uncertain, but it seems to be connected with the Pagan celebration

of that season (the winter solstice) by lighting great fires. Hence we speak of the yule-log, and fires at yule, as here (and in *The Marriage of Geraint*, 558, — 'Glow'd like the heart of a great fire at Yule').

614. **And this am I**, *i.e.* 'I am content.' He means, 'As poor men must be content with small fires, so I must be content with but a little love to warm my cold heart.' Percivale has said that after he was joined with Galahad he cared not for anything upon earth, upon which his brother monk puts in a modest plea for some little friendship notwithstanding. At the same time he suggests that if this small amount of friendship and sympathy is so much to himself, what must it not be to have the full and entire union of hearts which marriage may give, and how hard must it have been for Percivale to cast this away from him.

so that, provided that : so in *Gareth and Lynette*, 131 :—

'So that ye yield me ... your full leave to go.'

621. **cast her aside** etc. The metaphor is of a flower, which notwithstanding its sweetness is cast away as if it were a weed.

622. **Foregoing**, 'giving up,' properly 'passing over,' formed with the prefix 'for-' (German *ver-*), with the original meaning 'from' or 'away' : cp. forbid, forfend, forget, forgive etc.

623. **want**, *i.e.* 'are without.'

double life is the united life of man and woman in marriage : he dwells upon the 'warmth' of it because he feels so much the need of love to warm his own heart.

624. **plagued**, because of the thought that they miss this happiness.

625. **a life so rich** : rich because double instead of single :—

'everywhere
Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,
Two in the tangled business of the world,
Two in the liberal offices of life.'—*Princess*, 2, 155 ff.

626. **Ah, blessed Lord** etc. He breaks off remembering that what he is saying is perhaps inconsistent with his religious profession. He would have said, perhaps, 'We, who are plagued with dreams of something unspeakably sweet in a life so rich, cannot easily understand that those who might be permitted to enjoy it should cast it aside.'

627. **Seeing I never stray'd** etc. He gives as a reason for his earthliness that he has never gone abroad to see spiritual visions, but has lived always in his monastery with earthly thoughts about him, notwithstanding all that fast and penance can do to subdue them.

628. **in his earth**, that is, in his hole hollowed out in the earth :

the hole of a fox or badger is called his 'earth': cp. *Marriage of Geraint*, 215,—'I will track this vermin to their earths,' that is, to their refuge in the earth. Notice here the metaphor implied in the use of the word 'earth'; the monk implies that he, like the badger, has earth about him everywhere, meaning thoughts and cares of this earthly life, as opposed to those which are spiritual and heavenly.

633. **Sir Bors**: see note on line 200. His care is here entirely for Lancelot, and not at all for himself, see l. 650. The pelican as crest is no doubt meant as a symbol of the unselfish devotion to his kinsman, which characterises him. There is no other case in the *Idylls*, except that of Arthur himself, where a distinguishing crest is assigned to any knight of the Round Table, unless it be Tristram's spray of holly in *The Last Tournament*. In the romances the knights often ride without any distinguishing mark, and are frequently mistaken for one another.

636. **each made joy of either**, 'each rejoiced to see the other': for 'each ... either' cp. *Coming of Arthur*, 130, 'each had warded either in the fight.'

639. **maddening what he rode**: cp. the expression in *Geraint and Enid*:—

> 'Half ridden off with by the thing he rode.'

642. **the sluggard**: that sluggard, namely, against whom judgment is threatened: cp. *Gareth and Lynette*, 34,—'tho' ye count me still the child.'

643. **For now there is** etc.: a reference to the Bible, *Proverbs*, 26, 13:—'The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way': but that which the sluggard says as an excuse for not going forth, he who has been awakened from sloth may say in sincerity, because he feels that the penalty of his former neglect may overtake him at any moment.

646. **his former madness**. Lancelot had gone mad for two years because of Guinevere's anger with him on account of Elaine, daughter of King Pelles, whom she supposed he loved. He was sought in vain by his kinsmen and other knights, and finally healed by the Sangrail at the court of King Pelles: see *Morte Darthur*, 11, 9, and 12, 4.

648. **For Lancelot's kith and kin** etc. Compare with this the passage in *Lancelot and Elaine*, 464 ff., where Lancelot appeared disguised in the lists at Camelot, and overthrew all he met:—

> 'But in the field were Lancelot's kith and kin,
> Ranged with the Table Round that held the lists,
> Strong men, and wrathful that a stranger knight
> Should do and almost overdo the deeds
> Of Lancelot . . . . . .

. . . a fury seized them all,
A fiery family passion for the name
Of Lancelot, and a glory one with theirs.'

And so they bore down upon him all together, and overbore him. See also *Morte Darthur*, 11, 9, where Lancelot's kinsmen, Bors, Lionel, and Ector de Maris, speak their mind to Guinevere about her usage of him.

648. **kith** is connected with words meaning to know or make known, as 'ken,' 'kythe' etc. (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*). It is hardly used in modern English except in this expression 'kith and kin' meaning relations and connections.

650. **had been**, 'would have been,' answered by 'so.'

652. **The Holy Cup of healing.** In all the legends the Holy Grail is a vessel of healing, physical as well as spiritual, and it had already proved so for Lancelot in especial, see note on l. 646.

654. **after**: used as with words meaning desire: 'he had no heart after the Quest,' means he had no desire after it, nor consequently any heart in it. The words 'If God would send the vision' etc. are given as the substance of what Bors felt and said.

661. **Paynim amid their circles** etc. 'Paynim' is here used as an adjective for 'pagan,' but properly Paynim should mean 'heathen lands,' from Old French *paienisme*, Low Latin *paganismus*. However, its use instead of 'pagan' is as old as Spenser. For 'pagan,' see note on l. 478.

The 'circles' and upright stones here mentioned are the temples and other monuments of the Druid religion, consisting of circles formed of huge stones set upright, as at Stonehenge, Avebury, etc.

662 **They pitch up**, *i.e.* they set up fixed in the ground: 'to pitch,' connected with 'pike,' means to stick a point into the ground; so we speak of pitching a tent.

663. **that old magic** etc. Julius Caesar, the chief contemporary authority, says of the Druids, 'Multa praeterea de sideribus atque eorum motu .. disputant' (Moreover they hold much discourse about the stars and their motions).—*Bell. Gall.* 6, 14.

667. **A mocking fire.** The words are, as Percivale says, almost Arthur's own, but they are here the language of pure unbelief and scorn of the Quest and its object, whereas in Arthur's mouth they indicated so high an estimate of these that he was led to prophesy that few would be found worthy of them, and that most would follow false paths.

what other fire etc. These are apparently the words of the pagan scoffers, 'what true fire can there be but that which warms the world?' (*i.e.* the Sun). These pagans would evidently be worshippers of the heavenly bodies and the elemental powers.

670. **chafed**: properly to chafe means to warm (French *échauffer*), hence sometimes to rub (especially for warming, but also in general), as in *Geraint and Enid*, 27, 'chafing his shoulder,' and 581, 'chafing his pale hands,' and sometimes, as here, to vex or rouse to anger. This latter meaning seems to be derived rather from the idea of friction in rubbing, than from that of warmth of passion. It is also intransitive, 'to be vexed,' as *Enoch Arden*, 471,—'to chafe as at a personal wrong.'

675. **hollow-ringing**: a fine epithet, which must be taken primarily here of the sound which the wind made, sweeping through the heaven. Note that it is the concavity of the heavens which is conceived as causing the sound to ring.

677. The scansion is, 'Heávy | as it wás | etc.

678. **Such as no wind could move**: and therefore it must have been by miracle that it fell.

679. **Glimmer'd the streaming scud**: 'scud' is that which moves quickly, from the same stem as 'shoot,' Anglo-Saxon *scótian*: hence it means here cloud which moves rapidly across the heaven. 'Glimmer' is one of those picturesque words which are especially characteristic of Tennyson: a few instances will suffice to show the usage of it:—

> 'as a wild wave in the wide North-sea
> Green-glimmering toward the summit.'
> *Lancelot and Elaine*, 480.
>
> 'where, couch'd at ease,
> The white kine glimmer'd' (in the twilight).
> *In Memoriam*, 95, 15.
>
> 'As the gray dawn stole o'er the dewy world,
> And glimmer'd on his armour in the room.'
> *Geraint and Enid.*
>
> 'The casement slowly grows a glimmering square'
> (to the eyes of a dying man).
> *Princess*, 4, 34.
>
> 'Her taper glimmer'd in the lake below.'
> *Edwin Morris*, 135.

So also in Shakspeare:—

> 'The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day.'
> *Macb.* 3, 3, 5.
>
> 'Through the house give glimmering light.'
> *Mids. Night's Dream*, 5, 1, 398.

In all cases it is used of subdued or dim half-lights. Originally the word is simply a frequentative of 'gleam.'

680. **Still as the day was loud**, a night of calm after a day of boisterous wind and storm.

681. **The seven clear stars** etc. The reference is evidently to the seven brightest stars of the constellation called the Great Bear or the Waggon, which circle round the pole-star. The knights had called them Arthur's Table Round, because the circle which they made in the heavens seemed like that of the Round Table, in those earlier days of enthusiasm referred to by Tristram in *The Last Tournament*, 333 ff. :—

'when our King
Was victor wellnigh day by day, the knights,
Glorying in each new glory, set his name
High on all hills and in the signs of heaven.'

685. **And these** etc. The former sentence is resumed after the parenthesis by the word 'And,' as in Greek sometimes δέ marks resumption after a break.

689. **grace**, 'favour': so in *Lancelot and Elaine*, 381 :—

'"Do me this grace, my child, to have my shield
In keeping till I come." "A grace to me,"
She answer'd.'

697. **Sir Bors it was** etc. : see l. 40.

700. **and his eyes** etc. Cp. *The Miller's Daughter*, 12 :—

'gray eyes lit up
With summer lightnings of a soul,
So full of summer warmth, so glad' etc.

A smile from the lips alone, when the eyes do not light up at the same time, is taken to be a sign of insincerity, and Bors was above all things a 'loyal man and true.'

706. **sooth**, 'truth,' connected with the root from which 'essence' is derived, the Latin *-sens* (as in *ab-sens* etc.) : cp. 'forsooth' and 'soothsayer.'

711. **Pass not from door to door** etc., that is, do not enter the mind and at once pass from it, like a person entering a house by one door and leaving it at once by another, but abide within.

713. **our horses** : the verb belonging to this subject is in l. 717.

714. **heaps of ruin** : the ruin made by the storm referred to in l. 726. These figures are those stone ornaments of the corners of the streets, which are mentioned in l. 350.

715. **basilisks**, fabulous snakes, supposed to have crowns on their heads (whence their name, from *βασιλεύς*, 'king'), whose look was thought to be deadly.

cockatrices in heraldry are winged snakes.

716. **talbots** were large dogs of a peculiar breed. In heraldry the talbot is found as the crest of the Shrewsbury family, whose surname is Talbot, as well as of others.

717. **Raw**, because a freshly broken place was left where the ornaments had been wrenched away.

718. **dais-throne**, so in the *Passing of Arthur*, 386:—'High from the dais-throne.' A dais is a raised part of the floor of a hall, where the high table usually stands. The word originally meant 'table' or 'high table,' from French *deis*, Latin *discus* (cp. 'desk'), then it came to mean the raised platform where the table stood. The dais-throne here would be a seat on this raised platform at the end of the hall.

720. **a tithe**, 'a tenth part.'

722. **bad me hail**: to bid a person hail is the same kind of phrase as to bid him welcome or bid him farewell: in all these cases the greeting has the form of an imperative, like *salve*, *vale* etc., in Latin.

723 f. He means, 'The expression in thy countenance which tells us that thou hast fared well, proves that the fear we had of disaster for thee was groundless': 'welfare' meant originally prosperity in journeying.

725. **flooding ford**. *i.e.* ford of a river swollen by the storm so as to make it dangerous to cross.

726. **So fierce a gale**: 'so' refers to what has gone before, meaning 'such was the violence of the tempest that we could not but fear.'

727. **the strange devices of our kings**: for Camelot was

> 'rich in emblem and the work
> Of ancient kings who did their days in stone.'
> *Gareth and Lynette*, 297.

729. **moulded** for us, that is, made in our mould or form: cp. l. 238.

730. **Half-wrench'd** etc. It is symbolically implied that the Quest has brought about something of uncertainty in the direction of these golden wings, which pointed once so steadily to the pole-star: cp. l. 241.

735. **the quiet life**, that is,

> 'the silent life of prayer.
> Praise, fast, and alms,'

which is mentioned at the beginning of the idyll.

739 ff. In the romances Gawain follows the Quest seriously like the rest, and spends all the time from Whitsuntide to Michaelmas in riding hither and thither, though without lighting upon so many adventures as usual, so that he becomes weary of it. Finally he came in company with Sir Ector de Maris to a hermitage, where lived Nascien the hermit, to whom they confessed, and who told them that they failed of charity, abstinence,

and truth, and therefore might not attain the high adventure of the Sangrail. Gawain said he saw clearly that the good man had spoken truth, and that because of their sins it would not avail them to travail in the Quest, and so they commended him to God and departed. 'Then the good man called Gawaine, and said, It is long time since ye were made knight, and never since thou servedst thy Maker, and now thou art so old a tree, that in thee there is neither life nor fruit: wherefore bethink ye that thou yield unto our Lord the bare rind, sith the fiend hath the leaves and the fruit. Sir, said Gawaine, and I had leisure I would speak with you, but my fellow here, Sir Ector, is gone, and abideth me yonder beneath the hill. Well, said the good man, thou were better to be counselled. Then departed Gawaine' etc.—*Morte Darthur*, 16, 5.

742. **pavilion** comes through French from the Latin *papilionem*, 'a butterfly,' because of the supposed resemblance of a gay tent to a butterfly's wings outspread. This meaning of the word is found also in Latin.

743. For the rhythm cp. ll. 162 and 774.

748. **to whom at first** etc.: cp. note on l. 539.

750. **Athwart**, 'across,' for 'on thwart,' like 'about,' 'above' etc.

756. **the tears were in his eyes.** His grief is because Lancelot has not seen the vision, and is hardly recovered from his madness.

759. **like him of Cana**: alluding to the marriage-feast at Cana in Galilee, at which Jesus was present with His disciples, as described in the *Gospel of St. John*, 2, 1-11. Percivale's recollection of it is not quite accurate, for it was not the case that the bridegroom there 'kept his best until the last'; but after the miracle was performed of turning water into wine the 'ruler of the feast,' tasting it and not knowing whence it came, charged him with doing so,—'thou hast kept the good wine until now.'

762. **avail'd for thee**, that is, 'been of use for thee'; has it served to win for thee that spiritual gain which was desired?

766. **my friend, if friend** etc., taking up the word used by Arthur, which he feels is in some respects undeserved.

767. **Happier are those** etc. The character of Lancelot was such that he could not be contented to lead a life of sin and make no effort to free himself, he could not 'blind his eyes with clay' however much he might slip and fall. War was carried on ever between his guilty love for the Queen and his loyalty to the King, and this drove him often wellnigh mad, or even at times mad altogether:—

'The great and guilty love he bare the Queen
In battle with the love he bare his lord,
Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his time.
Another sinning on such heights with one,
The flower of all the west and all the world,
Had been the sleeker for it: but in him
His mood was often like a fiend, and rose
And drove him into wastes and solitudes
For agony, who was yet a living soul.'
Lancelot and Elaine, 244.

Happier, he thinks, are those who wallow like swine and blind themselves with slime of the ditch, than he, who sees clearly what his condition is.

767. **welter** means 'roll about,' frequentative from old English 'walten,' to roll over: cp. Germ. *walzen*.

770. **that all of pure** etc. That which Lancelot describes is strange to himself, but no new thing for human nature, which is so compounded of good and evil that the most exalted emotions often have in them the germ of what is base and sensual. The ideal of chivalry, according to which all that is noblest and most knightly in a man is made to grow out of devotion to a woman, lends itself readily to such intertwining of the wholesome and the poisonous growth as is here referred to, and great corruption of morals in fact arose from (or at least accompanied) this ideal.

773. **each as each**, that is, so closely intertwined that the one could scarcely be known from the other: for 'each as each' meaning 'the one as the other,' cp. note on l. 636.

774. **Not to be pluck'd asunder**: like the tares and the wheat of the parable, one could not be rooted up without uprooting the other also.

777 ff. **Then I spake** etc. In the Quest Sir Lancelot, having heard a voice which reproved him for his sin, came to a holy hermit and asked that he might be shriven. 'And then he told there that good man all his life, and how he had loved a queen unmeasurably, and out of measure long;—and all my great deeds of arms that I have done, I did the most part for the queen's sake, and for her sake would I do battle were it right or wrong; and never did I battle all only for God's sake, but for to win worship, and to cause me to be the better beloved, and little or nought I thanked God of it. Then Sir Launcelot said, I pray you counsel me. I will counsel you, said the hermit, if ye will ensure me that ye will never come in that queen's fellowship, as much as ye may forbear. And then Sir Launcelot promised he would not, by the faith of his body. Look that your heart and your mouth accord, said the good man.'—*Morte Darthur*, 13, 20.

780. **were**, *i.e.* 'would be.'

785. **whipt me**, as it were with the scourge of conscience.

786. **beaten down** etc. This symbolises the weakness arising from inward division and conflict, not, as Mr. Elsdale says, from acquiescence in sin.

787. **to whom the moving of my sword** etc. So in *Geraint and Enid*, 476, the pursuers of Geraint vanish panic-stricken, 'scared but at the motion of the man.'

788. **had been**, 'would have been.'

enow, in old English 'inoh' or 'enough,' Anglo-Saxon *genôh* or *genôg*, cp. German *genug*. The word is from the Aryan root *nak*, meaning to reach or attain (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*).

795. **Tho' heapt in mounds and ridges** etc. The mounds and ridges are of course the great waves, which drive like a cataract upon the shore, sweeping the sand up or dragging it down with them like the stream of a river. The expression is closely parallel to that in *Locksley Hall*, 6 :—

'the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.'

The word 'ridge' is a favourite one with the poet, especially in describing waves of the sea, thus we have in *Gareth and Lynette*, 1117 :—

'loud Southwesterns rolling ridge on ridge';

in *Enoch Arden*, 525 :—

'The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward';

in *Sea Dreams*, 204 :—

'a ridge
'Of breaker issued from the belt.'

799. **blackening**, 'looking black' amid the white of the breakers. To 'blacken' should mean to 'grow black,' but a similar modification of meaning is found also in other passages of Tennyson; *e.g. Boadicea*, 13 :—

'bark and blacken innumerable';

In Mem., 107, 14 :—

'in the drifts that pass
To darken on the rolling brine.'

803. **the great sea** : not the same as the 'great Sea' of l. 503. This is the sea of conflict, that the passage to the other life.

805. **Seven days I drove** etc. Observe the force which is obtained here by alliteration.

806. **with me drove the moon** etc. The great distance of the heavenly bodies makes them seem to move with us, when other objects which are near seem to drive past us.

808. **the shingle** is the coarse gravel of the shore, derived from

Norwegian *singl*, which comes from Norweg. *singla*, to tinkle, (from the same stem as the English 'sing.')

808. **grinding in the surge**: 'grinding' expresses the sound made by the waves with the shingle: 'surge' is formed directly from Latin *surgere*, to rise, and means the swell and thence the breaking of the waves.

809. **shock earth**: 'shock' used of two things striking against one another is common enough in Tennyson (*e.g.* 'where the moving isles of winter shock'), but here it means 'strike against,' a transitive use which is hardly found elsewhere except metaphorically, as 'to shock a person.' The word properly means to shake violently. Observe how the rhythm of the line expresses the sudden shock of the boat against the shore.

810. **The enchanted towers of Carbonek.** Few things in the poem are finer than the manner of this introduction of the castle of Carbonek, which has hitherto been kept so completely out of sight. This castle, called also Corbenic or Corbiere, was that which according to the legends was built as the resting place of the Holy Grail in the time of Alain, grandson of Joseph of Arimathæa. It was in the 'Terre Foraine,' and in it dwelt the king who was keeper of the Grail. Here dwelt king Pelles, whose daughter Elaine was mother of Galahad. To judge by the way that it is mentioned in the *Morte Darthur* (following the *Queste del Saint Graal*) the castle of Carbonek might be any ordinary castle (except that it contained the Grail and its mysteries), and Lancelot as well as other knights were constant visitors to it. This view, which makes the Quest of the Grail in its ordinary sense almost meaningless, and points in fact to a different version of the legend altogether, is rejected by Tennyson, who however introduces here the castle of Carbonek in such a manner that it in no way interferes with the spiritual significance of the Quest. Its mysterious distance, and its freedom from all those associations in the legends which are of an unspiritual and (in part) degrading character, make it a highly poetical and effective feature in the story. In no other instance has Tennyson more decisively shewn his power of transforming the authorities, which he may follow, into the material which his poetical instinct demands for his work.

For the passage of the *Morte Darthur* (17, 14 f.) which is here followed, see Introduction.

812. **chasm-like**, 'like breaks in a cliff': carrying on the comparison of the line above, 'A castle like a rock upon a rock,' the portals of it are compared to yawning clefts in a rock which meets the sea. 'Chasm' comes from *chasma*, the Latin spelling of the Greek χάσμα, a yawning cleft, from the stem of χαίνειν, to gape.

813. **there was none** etc., cp. *Morte Darthur*, 17, 14, 'there was a postern opened towards the sea, and was open without any keeping, save two lions kept the entry; and the moon shone clear.'

817. **sudden-flaring** means properly 'suddenly-blazing,' and the word is here used so as to suggest a comparison of the red manes suddenly bristling up upon their necks to tongues of flame suddenly blazing out.

822. **piecemeal**, 'to pieces,' properly 'a piece at a time,' from 'meal' (Old English, *-mele, -melum*), meaning a part marked off, especially a portion of time, cp. Germ. *mal*. So we have 'in cupmel,' in cupfulls, by a cup at a time (*Vision of Piers Plowman*, 5, 225); 'gobetmele,' by pieces at a time' (Wycliffe's Bible); 'by inchmeal,' by an inch at a time (Shaksp. *Tempest*, 2, 1, 3); also 'stoundmele,' at intervals. Notice that 'meal' meaning repast is the same word, signifying properly a fixed time for eating all together, as opposed to food irregularly taken.

Then with violence etc. In the *Morte Darthur* (17, 14) 'there came a dwarf suddenly, and smote him on the arm so sore that the sword fell out of his hand.'

824. **sounding hall**: the epithet, on which stress is laid by repetition, refers to the echoing of the tread in the vast and empty hall: cp. the Homeric *δώματα ἠχήεντα*, 'echoing rooms' (*Odyss.* 4, 72).

826. **painting on the wall Or shield of knight.** In Arthur's hall there was over the hearth a treble range of stone shields, some blank and some blazoned with the arms of knights.

828. **Thro' the tall oriel** etc., 'seen through the high oriel window': an oriel, Old English 'oriol' or 'oryall,' is properly a small room or portico; Old French *oriol*, Low Latin *oriolum*, probably for *aureolum*, because it would be ornamented with gilding. Then 'oriel' came to mean especially a recess in a room with a window, what we call a 'bow-window.'

on the rolling sea, *i.e.* shining over the rolling sea. The peaceful light of the moon over the troubled sea symbolises spiritual peace shed over the turmoil of conflict.

830. **Clear as a lark** etc. So Enid's voice sounding from the open casement of the hall is compared to 'the sweet voice of a bird.' This time the fact that it came from above, like the song of a lark, is an essential part of the comparison.

833. **as in a dream** etc.: as in those dreams in which we seem to be ever striving after an object which we never attain. On this whole passage Mr. Elsdale remarks: 'The blast is surely the setting in of conflict, and the seven days' voyage along the storm-tossed sea, the transition stage of struggle and doubt.

The lions guarding the landing on the solid rock beyond, with the interpreting voice, "Doubt not, go forward," show us the first necessary condition if this sea of doubt is to be safely passed, namely, *Faith*. The empty hall beyond tells of a withdrawal from the world for quiet and solemn communion with the infinite and the eternal. So also the moon shining aloft, above the rolling sea, whispers to the soul, in its calm serenity, of brighter and better things, far above all this turmoil and perplexity. The whole scene speaks of *Meditation* and *Prayer*. And now the clear sweet voice in the eastern tower—the tower nearest the rising sun—sings of *Hope*, and the myriad steps, up which Lancelot seems to climb with pain for ever, tell of *Endurance*.' —*Studies in the Idylls*, p. 70. This is very ingenious and no doubt partly true, but admitting fully the symbolical character of the poem we may perhaps doubt whether each incident can be so strictly interpreted.

835. **crannies**, 'cracks': the word is from French *cran*, a notch, Latin *crena*, cp. 'crenate' and 'crenellate' (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*).

836. **glory and joy** etc. In the *Morte Darthur* (17, 14) the song is 'Joy and honour be to the Father of Heaven.'

838. **essay'd**, 'attempted' (to open).

839. **gave**, 'gave way': **glare** means 'brightness,' from Old English 'glaren,' to shine, cp. 'glass,' which means properly 'shining.'

840. **seventimes-heated**: referring to the story in the Bible of Shadrach, Meshech and Abed-nego being cast into the furnace, which was heated seven times more than it was wont to be.—*Daniel*, 3, 19.

I is in an emphatic position, and means 'even I' (unworthy tho' I am). It is left hanging by the postponement of its verb, and afterwards it is repeated with the verb, 'yet methought I saw.'

841. **blasted** means properly 'blown upon,' 'destroyed by wind blowing,' but often with the collateral idea of heat, such as that of air rushing from a furnace, and especially of the effect of lightning on trees. Here the reference is to the hot blast from a furnace.

842. **With such a fierceness**, *i.e.* with such fierce heat.

843. **yet** answers not only to the preceding clauses 'though blasted and blinded,' but also to that which is implied in the emphasis on 'I' in l. 840, 'though unworthy.'

methought. The impersonal verb 'methinks' means 'it seems to me,' and is originally distinct from the verb 'to think,' though allied to it and constantly confused with it. The Old English *thenken* (of which the past tense should be *thoghte*) means

'think,' and *thinken* (past tense *thoughte*) 'seem,' but even in Old English *thoughte* was used as the past tense of both. The one is represented in German by *denken* and the other by *mir dünkt* (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*). As examples of the distinction in Chaucer we may quote from the *Canterbury Tales*:—

'now shull we here
Som deyntee thing, me thinketh by his chere.'
—*Prologue to Sir Topas.*

and

'Ryght so thenke I to serve him prively.'
—*Clerkes Tale*, 585.

844. **All** is an adverb, 'wholly.'

pall'd, 'enveloped,' from Latin *palla*, or *pallium*, 'a cloak.'

845. **and wings and eyes.** The words suggest those of the vision of Ezekiel in the Bible, *Ezekiel*, 10, 11, where describing the cherubim he says, 'And their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels, were full of eyes round about.'

847. **I had sworn**, *i.e.* 'I would have sworn' (that it was no mere vision but a reality).

848. **what I saw was veil'd** etc. Mr. Elsdale says 'to remind him of the necessity of purity,' but it rather indicates that those who have deeply sinned cannot at once, even by a great effort, gain admittance to all the mysteries of faith.

850. **left The hall long silent**: cp. Hom. *Odyss.* 11. 333:—

ὣς ἔφαθ', οἱ δ' ἄρα πάντες ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῇ,
κηληθμῷ δ' ἔσχοντο κατὰ μέγαρα σκιόεντα.

(So spake he, and they all were stilled in silence, and were held by a charm throughout the shadowy halls.)

851. **till Sir Gawain**—. The sentence is broken off and resumed afterwards in l. 855 with 'he said.'

853. As has been remarked before, Tennyson has set Gawain on a much lower level than belongs to him in the romances. In some of these he is beyond competition the first of Arthur's knights, and Chrestien de Troyes in *Erec et Enide* ranks him definitely above Lancelot, whose fame was in fact of rather late growth. In the Grail romances taken as a whole he is next in importance to Percivale, being himself of the seed of Joseph of Arimathæa, and being the leader in taking the vow of the Quest. Indeed, in one version, that of Heinrich von dem Türlin, he alone really achieves the Quest, the achievement of Percivale being only partial and comparatively fruitless. As the moral significance of the Quest became more and more developed, and especially after the introduction of Galahad as a leading personage, Gawain necessarily fell rather into the background, and in the

Morte Darthur he really does appear as 'a reckless and irreverent knight' on some occasions, as for instance that referred to in the note on l. 739. But in none of the romances do we find the utter lack of serious purpose which is his characteristic in Tennyson's poem. The poet has in fact deliberately chosen him to serve as a foil to Lancelot, who though erring was never blinded, and whose tragedy of spiritual warfare is set in contrast with the self-satisfied levity of Gawain.

854. **Now bolden'd** etc.: reckless and irreverent always, and now more boldly so because of Arthur's silence.

855. **my liege**: the word 'liege' comes through French from the German *ledig*, 'free' (from obligations of service), so that a liege-lord' is a 'free lord,' independent of other sovereignty. This is the sense in which it is here used, but it came also to be applied to those who were members of his band (free from other sovereignty), and 'lieges' came to mean 'subjects,' a change which was helped by confusion with the Latin *ligatus*, 'bound' (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*).

856. **Hath Gawain fail'd** etc. The question is a somewhat bold one, considering the rebuke which he had lately received from Arthur, when sent to deliver the diamond to the unknown knight who had won it in the jousts at Camelot, for not having found him and delivered it to him in person:—

> 'The seldom-frowning King frown'd, and replied,
> "Too courteous truly! ye shall go no more
> On quest of mine, seeing that ye forgot
> Obedience is the courtesy due to kings."'
> *Lancelot and Elaine*, 711 ff.

857. **stinted**: 'to stint' means originally 'to cut off short,' cp. 'stunt,' 'stunted'; hence to limit or restrain. 'When have I stinted stroke' means 'when have I failed to strike as I ought': observe the alliteration of 'stinted stroke' and 'foughten field.'

foughten field, 'fought battle': 'field' is for battle, as often (*e.g. Dream of Fair Women*, 97:—'in fair field Myself for such a face had boldly died'); and 'foughten' is the old form of past participle, used, for example, in Chaucer, *Cant. Tales, Prologue*, 62:—

> 'At mortal batailles hadde he ben fiftene,
> And foughten for our feith at Tramassene.'

Shaksp. *Henry V.*, 4, 6, 18:—

> 'As in this glorious and well-foughten field
> We kept together in our chivalry.'

Tennyson uses the phrase 'foughten field' also in the *Coming of Arthur*, 131, *The Princess*, 5, 287.

858. **as for thine**, *i.e.* 'thy quest,' because Percivale had been the first to take the vow.

862. **blue-eyed cat**. Darwin writes in *The Origin of Species*, ch. 1 :—'In monstrosities, the correlations between quite distinct parts are very curious; and many instances are given in Isidore Geoffroy St. Hilaire's great work on the subject.. Some instances of correlation are quite whimsical: thus cats which are entirely white and have blue eyes are generally deaf; but it has been lately stated by Mr. Tait that this is confined to the males.' That Tennyson should know this fact and introduce it into his poems is quite natural and characteristic: he is distinguished for exact observation and description of natural phenomena, and often uses very accurate scientific language about them, as in *In Memoriam*, 4, 11 :—

> 'Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,
> That grief hath shaken into frost.'

863. **noonday owl**: the owl is unable to see clearly in full daylight, his eyes being specially adapted to the darkness: a 'noonday owl' here means an owl abroad in the daylight at noonday.

871. **according to their sight**: Lancelot doubtfully saw a veiled vision; Bors saw it unveiled indeed, but was himself in captivity, whence the vision did not entirely release him; while Percivale alone saw it clearly leading the way to the spiritual city. Each had seen it as he was capable of seeing it.

872 ff. The meaning is that prophets and bards in old times, inspired as they were, and thrilled throughout with God's music, yet could express it only by imperfect human means and instruments; and so though God send a vision, we may not see it but as our human imperfection allows. It is none the less a sign from heaven because thus imperfectly apprehended.

873. **sacred madness of the bard**: the 'sacred madness' is that poetical frenzy which is attributed to the inspiration of a divine power: 'bard' is of course a general term for poet, but it is naturally used here in its special Celtic meaning: Arthur is referring to the prophets of Scripture, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and the rest, and to the bards of his own land, who were regarded as something between poet and prophet, divinely inspired.

875. **the framework and the chord**. *i.e.* the stringed instrument of music, lyre or harp, which belongs to the inspired bard. Evidently when the voice is to accompany the music this kind of musical instrument would be used by the singer.

877. **Nay—but thou errest**, etc.: this refers back to the beginning of Lancelot's speech, l. 766 ff. Arthur had been

reflecting upon this in silence, but Gawain's irreverent interruption led him first to utter a rebuke of that scornful levity which could see nothing but madness and failure in Lancelot's quest. He now takes up the thread of his thoughts and replies to Lancelot.

880. **With such a closeness, but** etc., *i.e.* 'so closely that there grew not apart from it some root of nobleness': 'but' means properly 'except.' 'It could not be so as thou sayest, except there grew' etc.

881. **Save that he were** etc. An exception within an exception. The reference is to l. 767:—

> 'Happier are those that welter in their sin,
> Swine in the mud, that cannot see for slime.'

883. 'Of this have a care, that it may bear its flower,' and also (it is implied) its fruit.

889. **And left me** etc. The construction of the sentence is irregular, but the sense is clear. 'Lost to me they were and left me' etc.

barren, for 'bare': cp. 'barren ribs of death' in *Gareth and Lynette*, 1347.

890. **a lean Order**: the great company of knights that should have remedied wrong and established right in the world, was shrunk and starved.

scarce return'd etc.: this clause, thrown in as a parenthesis, is explanatory of the word 'lean.'

tithe, 'tenth part.'

893. **Another hath** etc., *i.e.* Percivale.

895. **the silent life**: cp. ll. 4 and 735.

896. **And one** etc., *i.e.* Galahad.

897. **his chair desires him** etc. The vacancy of his place suggests a mute desire for the wonted occupant, which here is represented as if felt by the place itself, while in *Balin and Balan*, 75, 'Thy chair, a grief to all the brethren, stands Vacant,' it is attributed to the fellows of him who is away.

898. **However they may crown him otherwhere**: cp. l. 482:—

> 'and one will crown me king,
> Far in the spiritual city.'

Here the indefinite forms of expression ('they' and 'otherwhere') are finely suggestive.

899. **some among you** etc. Percivale had said:—

> 'Had thyself been here,
> My King, thou would'st have sworn.'—l. 277.

901. **Not easily**, etc. The view here taken of Arthur's character, and of the reason why he did not join the Quest, is one of Tennyson's happiest improvements on the romances. The romance of the Grail, having grown up at first apart from the Arthurian cycle, naturally did not make Arthur its hero, and it is evident that he was not qualified to take the place occupied by Percivale or Galahad in the later developments of the story. It was necessary therefore to make him abstain from the Quest, and he does so, reproaching Gawain for his vow, and expressing sorrow at the breaking up of that company of knights which he had been wont to have about him:—'For I have had an old custom to have them in my fellowship,' *Morte Darthur*, 13, 8. The reason alleged by Tennyson's Arthur for this abstinence is his strong sense that the claims of daily duty must be ranked before any visionary ideal, though when the daily duty was done, the visions might have their place; and this representation of Arthur as one not less but more interpenetrated than others with high moral and spiritual ideals, while at the same time he feels above all the importance of doing daily duty in the allotted sphere, shews him as a stronger and saner character than the visionary enthusiasts or the repentant sinners for whom the Quest of the Grail had so strong a fascination, precisely because it was something outside the allotted sphere. It supplies also the necessary correction to the narrow and one-sided view of Arthur taken by Guinevere, who regards him as one who walks in a world of unattainable ideals,—

> 'Rapt in this fancy of the Table Round,
> And swearing men to vows impossible,
> To make them like himself.'
>
> *Lancelot and Elaine*, 179 ff.

902. **hind**, 'peasant,' from old English 'hine,' a servant (the *d* is excrescent) (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*).

906. **Let visions** etc. He is not a despiser of visions, nay he is disposed sometimes to feel that all is vision save his own spiritual existence and that of God, and the relation between the two established by 'that One who rose again,' on which rests the fact of daily duty.

It should be observed that Arthur's visions do not affect those things which for him are supremely important, God, the Saviour, and himself; these he knows are no vision, and these include all that he requires for his guidance. He is not like those who stake their all on the appearance of such a sign from heaven as the Grail. What he knows is enough for him, and ought to be enough for others, of whom it might fairly be said, 'If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.'

913. **himself**, that is, his true spiritual self, apart from body. As an illustration of the state which is here spoken of a passage may be quoted from a letter written by Tennyson to a friend about certain experiences of his own. He says that from boyhood he has frequently had a kind of waking trance, when he has been all alone. 'This,' he continues, 'has often come upon me through repeating my own name to myself silently, till, all at once, as it were, out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, the individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being, and this not a confused state, but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, utterly beyond words, where death was an almost laughable impossibility, the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction, but the only true life.' This state is described poetically in *The Ancient Sage*:—

> 'for more than once, when I
> Sat all alone, revolving in myself
> The word that is the symbol of myself,
> The mortal limit of the Self was loosed,
> And past into the Nameless, as a cloud
> Melts into Heaven. I touch'd my limbs, the limbs
> Were strange not mine—and yet no shade of doubt,
> But utter clearness, and thro' loss of Self
> The gain of such large life as match'd with ours
> Were Sun to spark.'

914. **Nor the high God** etc., *i.e.* 'knows that God is not a vision to him.'

that One etc. Jesus Christ, regarded as Mediator between God and man.

INDEX TO THE NOTES.

(*The numbers refer to the lines.*)

A

'adulterous race,' 80.
alliteration, 211, 261.
Ambrosius, 540.
anon, 599.
Aromat, 48.
Arthur's character, 275, 901 ff.
'Arthur's Table Round' (constellation), 681.
Arviragus, 61.
athwart, 750.

B

bandit, 207.
basilisk, 715.
battles of Arthur, 250.
bees, metaphor of, 214.
Bible referred to, 287, 447, 452, 509, 527, 643, 759 840, 845.
'blacken,' 799.
blank, 255.
blast, 841.
blaze, 508.
blazon, 248.
'blue-eyed cat,' 862.
bolt, 221.
Bors, 200.
brand, 253.
breviary, 545.
broken construction of sentences, 298, 338, 626.
burdock, 570.

C

Camelot, 6, 218, 228, 340 ff.
Cana, marriage of, 759.
Carbonek, castle of, 810.
casque, 411.
chafe, 670.
challenge, 319.
chasm, 812.
cloisters, 14.
clomb, 427.
cockatrice, 715.
coins, comparison with, 25.
'cousin,' 200.
cowl, 5.
cranny, 835.
crazy, 347.
'crisping,' 381.

D

'dais-throne,' 718.
doom, 177.
'double life,' 623.
dragon as crest, 263.
Druid religion, 661 ff.
dub, 137.

E

'each .. either,' 636.
earth (of a badger), 628.
eft, 569.
ellipse of relative, 134.
— of antecedent, 539, 748.
enow, 788.
ere, 16.
Excalibur, 253.

F

fade, 121.
falter, 567.
'for' in Tennyson, 315, 540.
forego, 622.

G

Galahad, 135, 468.
Gate of the three Queens, 358.
Gawain, 202, 739, 853.
Glastonbury, 52.
'glimmer,' 679.
gossip, 553.
grace, 689.
Grail, *or* Graal, 46.
griffin, 350.

H

hall of Arthur, 225.
'heads of violence,' 310.
heal, 94.
healing power of the Grail, 94, 646, 652.
hind, 902.
'hollow-ringing heavens,' 675.
Homeric epithets, 209, 824.
horde, 479.

J

Joseph of Arimathæa, 51.
jousts, 34.

K

kith, 648.

L

Lancelot's madness, 646; his kinsmen, 648; his character, 767.
lark's song, 830.
lawn, 380.
lewd, 148.
liege, 855.
'lion in the way,' 643.
lists, 362.
lyre referred to, 875.

M

madness of Lancelot, 646.
maim, 297.
market-cross, 558.
'martin's nest,' 548.
mere, 252.
Merlin, 226.
metaphors commented on, 75, 214, 298, 319, 490, 541, 670, 711.
methought, 843.
'milky,' 210.
misadvertence, 175.
'mocking fire,' 667.
monotonous structure of sentences, 103, 234, 371, 473.
Moriah, 50.
mould, 238.

N

'noiseful,' 1.

O

oriel, 828.

P

Pagan, 478.
pale, 21.
parentheses in Tennyson, 21, 73, 541.
pause after first word of the line, 82, 110, 142, 194, 275, 495.
pavilion, 742.
Paynim, 661.
pelican as crest, 633.
Percivale, 2.
piecemeal, 822.
pier, 503.
prest, 267.
progress of human race, 234.
prowess, 1.

Q

quagmire, 320.

R

random, 557.
'red-rent,' 211.
refectory, 41.
repetition, 313, 328, 473, 491.
rhythmical effects, 118, 162, 229, 247, 458, 611.
'ridges,' 795.
Round Table, 90.
'ruinous,' 429.

S

sacramental symbolism, 46.
'sacred madness,' 873.
'sacring of the mass,' 462.
samite, 513.
Sangraal, 46.
scandal, 78.
'scarr'd,' 490.
scud, 679.
Sea, the great, 508.
sear, 265.
Seasons in the *Idylls*, 179.
seven stars (of the Great Bear), 681,
shingle, 808.
'shining hair,' 209.
'shock' (verb), 809.
'shrilling,' 289.
Siege perilous, 172.
'silent life,' 4, 895; cp. 735.
similes commented on, 145, 548.
'so that,' 614.
sooth, 706.
'sparkle out,' 33.
'spiritual city,' 161.
star, comparison with, 517.
stint, 857.
'sudden-flaring,' 817.
supplication, 601.
symbol, 233.
symbolism of the poem, 225, 250, 389, 397, 413, 427, 436, 489, 730, 786, 833.

T

Table Round, 90.
talbot, 716.
Taliessin, 300.
teem, 541.
thorpe, 547.
'to-day,' 67.
'twelvemonth and a day,' 197.

U

'unremorseful,' 261.
utter, 84.

V

visions of Arthur, 906 ff.
vows of Arthur's knights, 90.

W

'wandering fires,' 319.
wattles, 63.
welfare, 723.
white armour of Galahad, 135.
White Horse, 312.
winters in reckoning age, 85.
wrought, 10.
wyvern, 350.

Y

yearn, 506.
yew-tree, pollen of, 15.
yore, 64.
yule, 612.

Z

zone, 232.

GLASGOW: PRINTED AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS BY ROBERT MACLEHOSE AND CO. LTD.

MACMILLAN'S ENGLISH CLASSICS.

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES.

ADDISON—SELECTIONS FROM THE SPECTATOR. By K. Deighton. 2s. 6d.
——THE SPECTATOR. (Essays I.-L.) By Rev. J. Morrison, M.A., D.D. 2s. 6d.
ADDISON and STEELE—COVERLEY PAPERS FROM THE SPECTATOR. By K. Deighton. 1s. 9d.
ARNOLD—SELECTIONS FROM POEMS. By G. C. Macaulay. 2s. 6d.
AYTOUN'S LAYS—By H. B. Cotterill, M.A. 6d.
BACON—ESSAYS. By F. G. Selby, M.A. 3s.
——SELECTIONS FROM BACON'S ESSAYS. First Series. By R. O. Platt. 6d.
——SELECTIONS FROM BACON'S ESSAYS. Second Series. By R. O. Platt. 1s.
——THE ADVANCEMENT OF LEARNING. By F. G. Selby, M.A. Book I., 2s. Book II., 4s. 6d.
——THE NEW ATLANTIS. By A. T. Flux. Sewed, 1s.
BOSWELL—JOURNAL OF A TOUR TO THE HEBRIDES. By H. B. Cotterill, M.A. 2s. 6d.
BUNYAN—PILGRIM'S PROGRESS. By Rev. J. Morrison, M.A., D.D. 1s. 9d.
BURKE—REFLECTIONS ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION. By F. G. Selby, M.A. 5s.
——SPEECH ON AMERICAN TAXATION; SPEECH ON CONCILIATION WITH AMERICA; LETTER TO THE SHERIFFS OF BRISTOL. By F. G. Selby, M.A. 3s. 6d.
——THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF THE PRESENT DISCONTENTS. By F. G. Selby, M.A. 2s. 6d.
BYRON—CHILDE HAROLD. By Edward E. Morris, M.A. Cantos I. and II., 1s. 9d.; Cantos III. and IV., 1s. 9d.
CAMPBELL—SELECTIONS. By W. T. Webb, M.A. 2s.
CHAUCER—SELECTIONS FROM CANTERBURY TALES. By H. Corson. 4s. 6d.
——THE SQUIRE'S TALE. By A. W. Pollard, M.A. 1s. 6d.
——THE PROLOGUE. By the same. 1s. 9d.
——THE KNIGHT'S TALE. By the same. 1s. 9d.
——THE NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE. By the same. 1s. 6d.
CHOSEN ENGLISH—Selections from Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Lamb, and Scott. By A. Ellis, B.A. 2s. 6d.
COLERIDGE—THE ANCIENT MARINER. By P. T. Creswell, M.A. 1s.
COWPER—THE TASK. BOOKS IV. and V. By W. T. Webb, M.A. Sewed, 1s. each.
——THE TASK. Book V. Sewed, 6d.
——SELECTIONS FROM LETTERS. By W. T. Webb, M.A. 2s. 6d.
——SHORTER POEMS. By W. T. Webb, M.A. 2s. 6d.
——THE EXPOSTULATION. Sewed. 1s.
DRYDEN—SELECT SATIRES—ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL; THE MEDAL; MAC FLECKNOE. By J. Churton Collins, M.A. 1s. 9d.
——THE HIND AND THE PANTHER. By Prof. W. H. Williams. 2s. 6d.
ENGLISH POETRY—FROM BLAKE TO ARNOLD. (1783-1853.) Introduction by C. J. Brennan, M.A. Edited by J. P. Pickburn and J. le Gay Brereton. 2s. 6d.
GOLDSMITH—THE TRAVELLER and THE DESERTED VILLAGE. By A. Barrett, B.A. 1s. 9d. THE TRAVELLER and THE DESERTED VILLAGE, separately, 1s. each, sewed.
——THE TRAVELLER and THE DESERTED VILLAGE. By Prof. J. W. Hales. 6d.
——VICAR OF WAKEFIELD. By Michael Macmillan, D.Litt. 2s. 6d.
GRAY—POEMS. By John Bradshaw, LL.D. 1s. 9d.
——ODE ON SPRING and THE BARD. Sewed. 6d.
——ELEGY IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD. Sewed, 6d.
HELPS—ESSAYS WRITTEN IN THE INTERVALS OF BUSINESS. By F. J. Rowe, M.A. and W. T. Webb, M.A. 1s. 9d.
HOLMES—THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST TABLE. By J. Downie, M.A. 2s. 6d.
JOHNSON—LIFE OF MILTON. By K. Deighton. 1s. 9d.
——LIFE OF DRYDEN. By P. Peterson. 2s. 6d.
——LIFE OF POPE. By P. Peterson. 2s. 6d.
LAMB—THE ESSAYS OF ELIA. First Series. By N. L. Hallward, M.A., and S. C. Hill, B.A. 3s. Second Series, 3s.
——TALES FROM SHAKESPEARE. By C. D. Punchard, B.A. 1s. 6d.
LONGFELLOW—COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH. By W. Elliot, M.A. 1s.
——THE SONG OF HIAWATHA. By H. B. Cotterill, M.A. 1s. 6d.
——EVANGELINE. By H. B. Cotterill, M.A. 1s. 9d.
MACAULAY—LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME. By W. T. Webb, M.A. 1s. 9d.—HORATIUS, separately, 6d.—ESSAY ON ADDISON. By R. F. Winch, M.A. 2s. 6d.—ESSAY ON WARREN HASTINGS. By K. Deighton. 2s.—ESSAY ON BOSWELL'S LIFE OF JOHNSON. By R. F. Winch, M.A. 2s. 6d.—ESSAY ON WILLIAM PITT, EARL OF CHATHAM. By R. F. Winch, M.A. 2s. 6d.—ESSAY ON MILTON. By H. B. Cotterill, M.A. 2s. 6d.—ESSAY ON FREDERIC THE GREAT. By A. T. Flux. 1s. 9d.—LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON. By H. B. Cotterill, M.A. 2s.—LIFE OF OLIVER GOLDSMITH. By the same. 2s.—LIFE OF PITT. By R. E. Winch, M.A. 2s.

MALORY—Morte D'Arthur. By A. T. Martin, M.A. 2s. 6d.

MILTON—Paradise Lost. Books I. and II. By Michael Macmillan, D.Litt. 1s. 9d. Books I.-IV., separately, 1s 3d. each; Book III., sewed, 1s.—Lycidas Sonnets, &c. By W. Bell, M.A. 1s. 9d.—Paradise Lost. Book VI. By H. B. Cotterill, M.A. 1s.—Areopagitica. By the same. 2s.—Comus. By W. Bell, M.A. 1s. 3d.—Lycidas. By the same. Sewed, 6d.—Samson Agonistes. By H. M. Percival, M.A. 2s.—Tractate of Education. By E. E Morris, M.A. 1s. 9d.—Lycidas and Comus. By W. Bell, M.A. 1s. 6d.

MORE.—The Utopia of Sir Thomas More. By H. B. Cotterill, M.A. 2s. 6d.

PALGRAVE—Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics. Book I. By J. H. Fowler, M.A. 1s. 6d. Book II. By W. Bell, M.A. 1s. 6d. Book III. By J. H. Fowler. 1s. 6d. Book IV. Edited by J. H. Fowler. 1s. 6d. Notes to Books I. to IV. 2s. 6d.

POEMS OF ENGLAND. A Selection of English Patriotic Poetry. By Hereford B. George, M.A., and Arthur Sidgwick, M.A. 2s. 6d.

POPE—Essay on Man. Epistles I.-IV. By E. E Morris M.A. 1s. 3d.; sewed, 1s.

——Essay on Man. Epistle I. Sewed, 6d.

—— Essay on Criticism. By J. C. Collins, M.A. 1s. 9d.

REPRESENTATIVE ENGLISH POEMS. By G. S. Brett. 3s. 6d.

SCOTT—The Lady of the Lake. By G. H. Stuart, M.A. 2s. 6d.; Canto I., sewed, 9d.—The Lay of the Last Minstrel. By G. H. Stuart, M.A., and E. H. Elliot, B.A. 2s. Canto I., sewed, 9d. Cantos I.-III., 1s. 3d.; sewed, 1s.—Marmion. By Michael Macmillan, D.Litt. 3s. Cantos I. and VI., 1s. Canto VI., 1s.—Rokeby. By the same. 3s.—The Lord of the Isles. By H. B. Cotterill, M.A. 2s. 6d.—Quentin Durward. 2s. 6d.—Kenilworth. 2s. 6d. —The Talisman. 2s. 6d.—Woodstock. 2s. 6d.—Fortunes of Nigel. 2s. 6d. —Ivanhoe. 2s. 6d.—Old Mortality. 2s. 6d.

SELECTED POEMS from Gray, Burns, Cowper, Moore, Longfellow. By H. B. Cotterill, M.A. 1s.

SHAKESPEARE—Plays edited by K. Deighton.—The Tempest, 1s. 9d. Much Ado about Nothing, 2s. A Midsummer Night's Dream, 1s. 9d. The Merchant of Venice, 1s. 9d. As You Like It, 1s. 9d. Twelfth Night, 1s. 9d. The Winter's Tale, 2s. King John, 1s. 9d. Richard II., 1s. 9d. Henry IV., Part I., 2s. 6d. Henry IV., Part II., 2s. 6d. Henry V., 1s. 9d. Henry VIII., 1s. 9d. Coriolanus, 2s. 6d.; sewed, 2s. Romeo and Juliet, 2s. 6d. Julius Cæsar, 1s. 9d. Macbeth, 1s. 9d. Hamlet, 2s. 6d.; sewed, 2s. King Lear, 1s. 9d. Othello, 2s. Antony and Cleopatra, 2s. 6d.; sewed, 2s. Cymbeline, 2s. 6d. Two Gentlemen of Verona, 1s. 9d.

——Richard III., by C. H. Tawney, M.A. 2s. 6d.

SOUTHEY—Life of Nelson. By Michael Macmillan, D.Litt. 3s.

SPENSER—The Faerie Queene. Book I. By H. M. Percival, M.A. 3s.

——The Shepheards Calendar. By C. H. Herford, Litt.D. 2s. 6d.

STEELE—Selections. By L. E. Steele, M.A. 2s.

TENNYSON—Selections. By F. J. Rowe, M.A., and W. T. Webb, M.A. 3s. 6d. Also in two parts, 2s. 6d. each. Part I. Recollections of the Arabian Nights, The Lady of Shalott, The Lotos-Eaters, Dora, Ulysses, Tithonus, The Lord of Burleigh, The Brook, Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington, The Revenge.—Part II. Œnone, The Palace of Art, A Dream of Fair Women, Morte D'Arthur, Sir Galahad, The Voyage, Demeter and Persephone.

——The Lotos-Eaters, Ulysses, Ode on the Duke of Wellington, Maud, Coming of Arthur and Passing of Arthur. By the same. 2s. 6d.

——Coming and Passing of Arthur, Dream of Fair Women, The Lotos-Eaters, Ulysses, Ode on the Duke of Wellington, The Revenge. By the same. 3s. 6d.

——Morte D'Arthur. By the same, sewed 1s.

——The Coming of Arthur; The Passing of Arthur. By F. J. Rowe, M.A. 2s. 6d.

——Enoch Arden. By W. T. Webb, M.A. 2s. 6d.

——Aylmer's Field. By W. T. Webb, M.A. 2s. 6d.

——The Princess. By Percy M. Wallace, M.A. 3s. 6d.

——Gareth and Lynette. By G. C. Macaulay, M.A. 2s. 6d.

——Geraint and Enid; The Marriage of Geraint. By the same. 2s 6d.

——The Holy Grail. By the same. 2s. 6d.

——Lancelot and Elaine. By F. J. Rowe, M.A 2s. 6d.

——Guinevere. By G. C. Macaulay, M.A. 2s 6d.

——Select Poems of Tennyson. By H. B. George and W. H. Hadow. 2s. 6d.

——The Cup. By H. B. Cotterill, M.A. 2s. 6d.

——Tiresias and other Poems. By F. J. Rowe, M.A., and W. T. Webb, M.A. 2s. 6d.

——In Memoriam. By H. M. Percival, M.A. 2s. 6d.

THACKERAY—Esmond. 2s. 6d.

WORDSWORTH—Selections. By W. T. Webb, M.A. 2s. 6d. Also in two parts, 1s. 9d. each.

——Selections. By H. B. Cotterill, M.A. 2s.

making of Arthur
line 118 – 141.